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# The Liar Paradox in Plato

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**Abstract**

Although most scholars trace the Liar Paradox to Plato's contemporary, Eubulides, the paper argues that Plato builds something very like the Liar Paradox into the very structure of his dialogues with significant consequences for understanding his views. After a preliminary exposition of the liar paradox it is argued that Plato builds this paradox into the formulation of many of his central doctrines, including the "Divided Line" and the "Allegory of the Cave" (both in the Republic) and the "Ladder of Love" (in the Symposium). Thus, Plato may have been the first to formulate the view that Graham Priest calls dialetheism, roughly, the view that some contradictions are, in an illuminating way, inescapable and true. The paper argues that Plato builds this Liar paradox into the formulation of his signature views because he holds that the attempt by finite human beings to theorize about transcendent realities results in the simultaneous necessity, and impossibility, of transgressing the limits of language—leading to the paradoxes (contradictions). Finally, it is argued that the existence of these paradoxes in these Platonic doctrines is the direct result of an intrinsic hermeneutical circle in Plato's aforementioned signature views.

**Keywords**: Plato, liar paradox, Kierkegaard, Dilthey, Wittgenstein, dialetheism

> Socrates: Then there is no lying poet in a God?
> Adeimantus: Not in my opinion.
> (Plato, *Republic*, 382d)
>
> Plato is a poet and a dramatist. And this does not mean, besides being a philosopher. He is a poet because he is a philosopher. (Randall, *Plato: Dramatist of the Life of Reason,* 3)

It is always difficult interpreting the works of a great philosopher, but this is especially so in Plato's case. There are

many reasons for this but one important reason is that Plato is neither just a philosopher nor an artist but a "Philosophical Artist" (Schleiermacher 1992, 4). In particular, although Plato's dialogues are themselves poetic (Elias 1984, 1; Griswold 2012, § 6), Plato's Socrates characterizes poets as liars (tellers of falsehoods) (Plato 1968, *Rep.* 382d). The self-reference in Plato's views about poetry yields a paradox. Since poets are liars, and Plato is himself a poet, his own views are lies (false). But if his own views are lies, then his view that the poets lie is also false—and so poets, including Plato himself, are *not* liars. This paradox derives from the fact that the "old quarrel" between philosophy and poetry (Plato 1968, *Rep.* 607b) is internal to Plato himself. Consequently, Plato weaves (something like) the Liar Paradox (hereafter **LP**) into *the very form of presentation* of many of his signature views in his dialogues—with the result that these views are *inevitably* logically paradoxical.

**LP** is a paradox of *self-reference*, and Plato (or to be more precise, certain characters in his dialogues), make statements about the views in the dialogues that have a similar paradoxical character. The paper focuses on "The Divided Line" (**DL**) where Plato gives one of the central expositions of his "theory of Forms". The paradox arises because **DL** is an image, and one of **DL's** own claims is that images are the most inadequate way of representing the truth. I argue that the self-reference in **DL** is paradoxical in a sense *analogous* to **LP**. Thus, if **DL** is an adequate statement of the view then it is *not* an adequate statement and if it not adequate then it us adequate. I also argue that analogous paradox is found in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (**AOC**) in the *Republic* and his "Ladder of Love" (**LOL**) in the *Symposium*. Plato thereby makes it logically impossible to state a *non-paradoxical* interpretation of these of his core views—insuring that the hermeneutical questions surrounding the dialogues are *inescapable*.

§ I explains the basics of **LP**. § II argues that **DL** is paradoxical in a sense *analogous* to **LP**. § III argues that by building (something like) **LP** into the presentation of his views, Plato insures that his views are inescapably logically paradoxical and he does this because he believes such paradox is inevitable given the limits of human cognition. § IV explains

the relevance of these insights to the hermeneutical issues surrounding Plato's dialogues.

## I. The Liar Paradox

> "[One can speak of logical paradoxes when one has] a situation in which, by reasoning that seems perfectly sound, we can show both that something must be true and that it must be false. … From earlier times we have the example of the [liar] paradox of Epimenides. … Paradoxes of this sort were puzzling, but down through the ages logicians have not attached much significance to them [believing that they] surely involve some trifling sort of verbal confusion, … That comfortable illusion has been shattered in recent times." (Barker 1964, 82-83)[1]

Although some scholars trace **LP** to the Epiminides paradox (circa 600 BC),[2] most trace **LP** *proper* to Plato's rough contemporary, Eubulides: "[S] says he is lying. Is what S says true or false?" (Dowden 2001, § 1) Since all propositions are either true or false, if it is true that S is lying, then since lying is telling falsehoods, it is false that S is lying. But if it is false that S is lying, then S is telling the truth when he says he is lying. If it is true that he is lying, then it is false that he is lying. P implies not-P. But if it is false that he is lying, then it is true that he is lying. Not-P implies P. It seems that Eubulides' statement is true if and only if it is false.[3]

Eubulides' formulation, however, contains inessential elements. There is no need to refer to a *person*, to what s/he *says*, or even to invoke the difficult *social* notion of *lying* (Mahon 2008, § 1). The essence of **LP** is captured in the self-referential sentence Q: "This sentence is false" (Dowden 2001, § 1). If Q is true, then it's true that Q is false. So Q is false. On the other hand, if Q is false, then it's false that Q is false. So Q is true. Q is true if and only if Q is false.

Some distinguish between the "simple falsity" **LP** ("This sentence is false") and the "simple untruth" **LP** ("This sentence is not true"), but it is sufficient for my purposes to treat these as two versions of *simple* **LP** (hereafter **SLP**) (Beall and Glanzberg 2011, § 1.2). Similarly, some see analogies between **LP** and Liar Cycles, Boolean Compounds and Infinite

sequences involving self-reference (Beall and Glanzberg 2011, §§ 1.3–1.5), and, some distinguish both the "Strenghtened Liar Paradox and the Contingent Liar Paradox from **LP** proper (Dowden 2001, § 1). The strengthened **LP** is illustrated by: "This sentence is not true, i.e., it is false or meaningless" (Dowden 2001, § 1). An example of the Contingent **LP** (hereafter **CLP**) is the case in which the last sentence in today's *NYT* is "The last sentence is tomorrow's *NYT* is true," and the last sentence in tomorrow's *NYT* is "The last sentence in yesterday's *NYT* is false" (Dowden 2001, § 1). This is called a contingent liar paradox because the paradox depends on contingent facts about the *NYT*. Fortunately, Liar Cycles, Infinite Sequences, Boolean Compounds, **CLP** and Strengthened **LP** are inessential to this paper. Although some of these exotic forms of **LP** may be found in Plato, I here argue only that (something like) **SLP** is found in Plato.[4]

It is worthwhile briefly to discuss the Epimenides-Paradox (hereafter **EP**). Although some scholars do not classify **EP** as a version of **LP** *proper*, it does *prefigure* **LP** in certain respects. The 19th century philosopher, Thomas Fowler (1969, 163) explains **EP** as follows:

> Epimenides the Cretan says, 'that all the Cretans are liars,' but Epimenides is himself a Cretan; therefore he is himself a liar. But if he be a liar, what he says is untrue, and consequently the Cretans are veracious; but Epimenides is a Cretan, and [so] what he says is true; hence the Cretans are liars, Epimenides is himself a liar, and what he says is untrue. Thus we may go on alternately proving that Epimenides and the Cretans are truthful and untruthful.[5]

Fowler represents **EP** as involving a *dialectical* movement from one horn of the paradox and the other. Fowler is correct that if all Cretans are liars, and Epimenides is a Cretan, then Epimenides is a liar. But his subsequent reasoning is flawed. He goes on to infer that "the Cretans" (i.e., "all Cretans") are veracious. But if Epimenides' universal claim is a lie (false), that only implies that *some* Cretans are veracious (Quine 1966, 8-9). One *cannot* infer either that Epimenides is or is not veracious. Epimenides' statement is not paradoxical when false. Thus, **EP** is similar in some respects, but *not* logically equivalent to **SLP**.

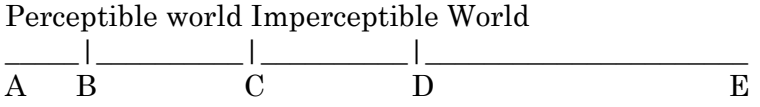
In **SLP** the self-reference that leads to the paradox is internal to the sentence and does not involve any essential reference to a *speaker* who refers to the truth of what s/he *says*.[6] Nor does **SLP** presuppose any contingent facts about the speaker or situation so it is distinct from **CLP**. The next section discusses the role of (something like) **SLP** in Plato's dialogues.

## II. The Liar Paradox in "The Divided Line"

> "Among the ancients Plato is termed the inventor of dialectic. …We are aware that everything finite, instead of being stable and ultimate, is rather changeable and transient; and this is exactly what we mean by the dialectic of the finite, by which the finite, as implicitly other than it is, is forced beyond its own immediate or natural being to turn suddenly into its opposite." (Hegel, 1978, § 8)
> "[A] profound experience in Socrates own life impels us to ask whether […] the birth of an artistic Socrates is altogether a contradiction in terms. (Nietzsche 1967, § 14)"

The central importance of "the Divided Line" (**DL)** in Plato's writings is indubitable (Smith 2005, § 6.a). Although there are many interesting points about **DL** that could be made, the present section focuses on one aspect of its logical structure. Plato's aim in **DL** is to give a picture (image) of the hierarchy of the different levels of reality and the different levels of cognition appropriate to these different ontological levels (Brumbaugh 1981, 14). Socrates draws a line which is first divided into two parts of *unequal* lengths, AC and CE:

The top (right) part, CE, represents the imperceptible world, and the bottom (left) part, AC, represents the perceptible world. Each of these two parts is further subdivided in the *same* proportions as the original division of the line, yielding four parts in total:



AB represents the *lower* part of the perceptible world. BC represents the *higher* part of the perceptible world. CD represents the *lower* part of the imperceptible world. DE represents the *higher* part of the imperceptible world.

Ontologically, DE represents the highest level of being, the Forms. CD represents the next highest level, roughly, mathematical objects. BC represents perceptible objects. AB represents images of perceptible objects. There are four levels of being, from the highest to the lowest degree of reality: Forms, mathematical entities, perceptible objects and images.[7]

Despite the fact that the higher level, CE, represents various grades of imperceptible entities, and the lower, AC, various grades of perceptible entities, there is a *resemblance*, although imperfect, between items at one level and those at the next.[8] The images in AB resemble the objects in BC, which, in turn, resemble the mathematical objects in CD (perhaps as an imperfect physical cube resembles a perfect mathematical cube). Finally, the mathematical items in CD resemble the perfect Forms in DE.[9]

A similar division characterizes the epistemological interpretation of the line. Corresponding to the Forms in DE is the type of cognition appropriate to Forms. Corresponding to the mathematical entities in CD is "thought" which Plato explains by analogy with the kind of hypothetical thinking in geometry and calculation (Plato 1968, *Rep.* 510c). Corresponding to the physical objects in BC is belief (*doxa*), including what *we* (not he) would call empirical knowledge. Finally, corresponding to the level of images in AB is opinion or illusion. The idea is that human beings begin their cognitive lives with illusory opinions, rise *via* experience to empirical beliefs about perceptible objects, until, with a grasp of mathematics, human beings rise to the level of thought by grasping the mathematical patterns in physical phenomena, and finally, a few gifted individuals may rise to the level of genuine philosophical "dialectical" knowledge (Plato 1968*, Rep.* 511b-c).

There are many interesting points one can make about the nuances in **DL**, but for present purposes, what is of interest is only one aspect of its "logical" structure. Specifically, it is a part of the thesis of **DL** that the mode of cognition appropriate

to AB is so far removed from reality that it is tantamount to *illuson*. Insofar as one cognizes an object in that way, perhaps via a visual or auditory image of a tiger, one is far removed from genuine knowledge. As delightful as such images are, no one could confuse the image of a tiger on paper or Blake's verbal image in "The Tyger" with scientific knowledge of tigers.

Although Plato's intuitive idea in **DL** has had tremendous influence, it too is a disguised paradox when it is applied *self-referentially*. For, **DL** claims that images are the lowest and most illusory form of cognition. Unfortunately, **DL** is itself an image. Even worse, as an image, which yields only illusions, it is employed to represent the highest form of cognition. **DL** offers, not a cognition of imagination, which would not necessarily be paradoxical, but of an imagination of cognition, which is.[10]

A logician asks: If S tells you she is lying, should you believe her? Similarly, if Plato tells you that his view about the relation of the perceptible and imperceptible worlds is given in the form of an image (**DL)**, part of the meaning of which is that images are the most illusory form of cognition, should you believe him? If **DL** is an adequate cognition, then, since **DL** is itself an image and images are illusory, then **DL** is itself illusory. On the other hand, if **DL** is illusory, then its assertion that images are illusory is itself illusory. But then **DL**'s imagery is *not* illusory. If the imagery in **DL** is adequate, then it is not adequate, and if its imagery is not adequate, then it is adequate. The logic of **DL** parallels that of **SLP**.

There are, of course, major dis-analogies between **SLP** and the present account of **DL**. Most obviously, the notions of truth and falsity, so central to the proper formulation of **SLP**, are replaced, in the present account, respectively, by adequate and inadequate, and there is a big difference between saying that something is true and that it is adequate, and between saying that something is false, and that it is inadequate.

That is true, but the present claim is not that **DL** is a simple mechanical rendering of **SLP**. The claim is that the logic of **DL** is *analogous* to **SLP**. It is in Plato's nature never simply to *copy* some idea, such as **SLP**, from another thinker, but, with

all artistry and logical acumen at his disposal, to transform it into something distinctly his own.[11]

In fact, one need not use only the truth-predicates, true and false, in order to generate a paradox analogous to **DL**. Consider the sentence **Z**: "This sentence is profoundly misleading". Once again, it is assumed that **Z** is either true or false. If **Z** is true, then, since **Z** states that **Z** is profoundly misleading, it is true that **Z** is profoundly misleading. But that means that it is profoundly misleading that **Z** is profoundly misleading. So **Z** is not profoundly misleading. P implies not-P. On the other hand, if **Z** is false, then, since **Z** states that **Z** is profoundly misleading, it is false that **Z** is profoundly misleading. But that means that it is true that **Z** is profoundly misleading. Not-P implies P. Although this formulation of the paradox replaces the truth-predicate, "false", with the predicate "profoundly misleading", one gets a paradox *analogous* to **SLP**. Since **DL** implies that **DL** is itself *epistemologically and metaphysically* profoundly misleading, **DL** is akin to **Z**: "This sentence, **DL**, is profoundly metaphysically and epistemologically misleading."[12] That is, Plato employs in **DL** (something like) the paradox of self-reference in **SLP** to express what he sees as a basic *metaphysical* and epistemological paradox rooted in the limitations of human cognition.[13]

It is, however, *possible* to state the paradox in **DL** in a form much closer to the standard formulation of **SLP**. In the *Sophist*, Plato talks of images as true or false (Cornford 1957, 188, 201, 212, 302; Kalkavage 2001, 15). Thus, if Plato tells you that **DL** is true, should be you believe him? If **DL** is true, then, since **DL** states that images are false, and since **DL** is itself an image, then **DL** is false. On the other hand, if **DL** is false, then **DL**'s claim that images are false is false. But then **DL** is true. If **DL** is true, then it is false, and if it is false, it is true. The logic of **SLP** and **DL** are *analogous* because both involve similar kinds of *self-reference.*

Despite the possibility of stating **DL** in this form closer to **SLP**, the present author prefers the *weaker* formulation according to which **DL** is only *analogous* to **SLP**. That is, although it is possible to *recast* **DL** in a form that looks more like a straightforward logical paradox, the product would no

longer be Plato's **DL**, but a watered-down substitute. What I find intriguing about Plato's version of **DL** is that he *transforms* **SLP** by *enriching* it with his own metaphysical and epistemological views and casts it in his unique artistic form in order to express his unique insight into a fundamental paradox in finite human cognition.

It is significant that a similar logic is found in other passages in Plato as well. It is found in the "Allegory of the Cave" (hereafter **AOC**), with which **DL** is closely connected. For **AOC** presents a picture of humankind's capacity to achieve philosophical truth, where part of the meaning of **AOC** is that **AOC** itself is profoundly inadequate to convey that kind of truth. If Plato tells you that he is going to give you an allegory to convey the nature of philosophical truth, where, he explains, part of the meaning of which is that his allegory is profoundly inadequate to convey what it attempts to convey, should you believe him?

The same pattern is also present in Diotima's image of the "ladder of love" (hereafter **LOL**) in the *Symposium* (Plato 1997d, 211e), where part of the meaning of her image is that the understanding of beauty achieved by images is profoundly inadequate to the true vision of "beauty's very self—unsullied, unalloyed, and freed from the mortal taint that haunts the frailer loveliness of flesh and blood". But that "mortal taint" infects Diotima's **LOL** itself. When Diotima gives her image of the nature and apprehension of Beauty, where part of the point of her image is that such images are profoundly inadequate to the kind of truth he is trying to convey, should Socrates believe her? It would seem that the "ways of paradox" (Quine 1966, 20) are deeply entrenched in Plato's dialogues. This should not be a surprise. It is simply another manifestation of the fact that a poetic philosopher, who vehemently denounces poets as liars but delivers his signature philosophical views in poetic form.

## III. Logical Paradox and the Limits of Language and Thought

> "[O]ne should not think slightingly of the paradox. For the paradox is the source of the thinkers passion, and the thinker without paradox is like the lover without feeling: a paltry mediocrity. But the highest

> pitch in every paradox is … to will to its own downfall and so it is … the supreme paradox of Reason to seek a collision, … The paradox of all thought is to discover something that thought cannot think. This passion is … present in all thinking, even in the thinking of the individual [who] participates in something transcending himself." (Kierkegaard 1974, 46)

Although many scholars have remarked that Plato creates obstacles to understanding his real views, there is a qualitative difference between using various artistic devices to make it *difficult* to discern his views and building a logical paradox into the very formulations of those views. But Plato did precisely that insofar as he builds (something like) **SLP** into the very fabric of his dialogues at **DL**, **AOC** and **LOL**.

It is important to note that the logic of **SLP** is inherent in **DL** itself. It does not matter whether **DL** is asserted by Plato, by one of his characters, or by anyone at all. Just as "This sentence is false" is internally paradoxical, so too is **DL**. But why would Plato wish to make the expression of his signature views inherently paradoxical?

In his essay on Plato's lecture on the Good, Whitehead (1966, § XIII) suggests that creativity involves the "inflow from the infinite into the finite". However, for anyone who holds that the perceptible world is an inherently imperfect copy of the perfect imperceptible world, such an "inflow" is inherently problematic. Since Plato's own words are part of the imperfect perceptible world, the imperfect human medium of words must also be incapable of conveying the infinite perfection of the imperceptible world.

Kierkegaard suggests that any attempt by finite human beings to "participate in something transcending" themselves *inevitably* involves one in the "supreme paradox of all thought" – the discovery of something thought cannot think. Plato's "theory" of Forms is just such an attempt to think a transcendent something that cannot be thought. If Plato is self-conscious about the paradox in such an attempt, it is only to be expected that his chosen form of expression must reflect these limitations. The present suggestion is that Plato's dialogues are not so much an attempt to think the Forms *per se* as to think the fact that human beings both must, and yet cannot, adequately think them.[14] Thus, all such attempts must be

paradoxical. If this is correct, the logical paradox woven into the fabric of **DL**, **AOC**, and **LOL** is not merely the form in which Plato clothes the message but is the essence of the message itself. To view Plato as a straightforward theorist of the Forms, without taking account of the intrinsic paradox in the attempt to think what cannot be thought, is to fail to see that, using Kierkegaard's words, the aim of the dialogues is to think "the supreme paradox of Reason, … though this paradox must in one way or another, prove its [own] undoing."[15] **DL** "proves its own undoing" insofar as, sharing the logic of **SLP**, it implies that if **DL** is an adequate cognition, then it is not adequate, and if it is not an adequate cognition, then it is adequate.

It is important not to confuse my central thesis here with the mere epistemological claim that one cannot know Plato's real views in the dialogues. It is, in fact, my opinion of that one can, at least sometimes, know some of Plato's views. The point of the present paper is logical, not epistemological, although it *may* have consequences for the way one conceives such epistemological issues. My claim is, rather, that one cannot formulate certain key views in the dialogues (**DL**, **AOC** and **LOL)** without falling into (something like) **SLP**, that is, into logical paradox. This does not imply that one cannot know those doctrines. It implies that one cannot know them un-paradoxically. Nor does anything in the present argument imply that one cannot *infer* Plato's these doctrines from the views of the characters in the dialogues. Once again, it only implies that one cannot infer them from the views in the dialogues un-paradoxically. Thus, even in his signature "views," and perhaps especially there, Plato presents the reader, not some much with views as paradoxes. *Dialetheias* is the 20th-21st century view, associated with modern paraconsistent logics, that some contradictions are true, where this is seen as deeply illuminating (Priest 2009, § 2.2).[16] On the present view, Plato holds that it is deeply illuminating that the human intellect, given its limitations, cannot know the *ultimate* truth about the cosmos without falling into (something like) logical paradox, and he builds this humbling insight into the logical structure of key views stated in his dialogues. Perhaps, therefore,

*dialetheias* too must be reckoned among those many "footnotes to Plato" to which Whitehead (1978, 39) alludes.

## IV. Hermeneutical Implications of Plato's Liar Paradox

> "[When] Medieval metaphysics seeks to reconcile the Greek system of eternal truths with the plan of God, the insolubility of the contradiction manifests itself. For one cannot harmonize the living … experience of the will … with the immutable world of eternal ideas […]." (Dilthey 1988, 286)

Hermeneutics, most generally, takes the *interpretation* of texts far more seriously than is usual (Grondin 1994, 20). One of the most important hermeneutical principles is called the "hermeneutical circle"—the view that the understanding of the parts of a text turns on the understanding of the whole text, which, in turn can only be understood on the basis of the understanding of the parts of the text (Rickman 1979, 34; Ramberg 2005, § 1 *et sq*.). This circular relationship between part and whole creates a dialectical "movement" back and forth between the understanding of the parts and the whole (Ramberg 2005, § 1). I argue that the fact that Plato builds something like **LP** into the very formulation of his views means that a *de facto* hermeneutical circle is built into the very fabric of such views.[17]

As noted earlier, Schleiermacher and others have observed that Plato chooses certain artistic "forms of communication" that make the issue of interpretation more pressing in Plato's case than it is for most philosophers. But it is one thing for Plato to employ a means of communication that make understanding his view difficult. It is quite another for him to formulate his views in such a way that they are *inherently logically paradoxical* (i.e., if the view at issue is true then it is false and if it is false then it is true). By formulating his views in this paradoxical way Plato insures not merely that there *is* no definitive statement of his views but that there logically *cannot* be a definitive *consistent* formulation of his views.[18]

To see the importance of this point consider Schleiermacher's (1992, 5) suggestion that despite all the roadblocks Plato places in the way of discerning his real views

someone S might claim "as far as possible to divine" Plato's views when they are not obvious. Schleiermacher admits such divination is achieved only with great difficulty.[19] But Schleiermacher has not appreciated the full depth of the problem. For, even if S has somehow managed correctly to divine Plato's views, S must face an additional problem not seen by Schleiermacher, i.e., if S has correctly divined Plato's views, what precisely has S divined? Since, on my view, what S has divined (in **DL**, **AOC**, **LOL**, etc.) is *inherently* logically paradoxical then S, even with the benefit of his/her divination, has *not* managed to get hold of anything unambiguous and clear-cut. Rather, S has only managed to divine something that is true if false and false if true. Thus, even if S has somehow "divined" Plato's views, the question of interpretation, and the associated "dialectical movement" back and forth between parts and whole, *necessarily* remains at the fore.

Second, on my interpretation, Plato builds something like the hermeneutical circle *into the very logical fabric* of his views. Consider the image in **DL** of a hierarchy of four different levels of understanding, with images at the very bottom, belief/opinion at the next highest level, (mathematical) thought at the next higher level, and "dialectic" at the highest level. Let us call the image drawn by Socrates to convey the view of **DL** *a part* of the meaning conveyed by **DL**. Similarly, let us call the *entire* set of verbal formulations of that view conveyed by **DL** *the whole* represented by **DL**! One must now ask: How is one supposed to employ that mere part, the image drawn by Socrates to understand the whole **DL**-view conveyed by that image-part? Since that image, being a mere image, cannot, so to speak, "show its sense",[20] it stands in need of interpretation by reference to the whole **DL**-view allegedly conveyed by that image. For *it is only by reference to that whole **DL**-view* that the significance of such image-parts is explained. There is no general problem with the fact that an image used to convey a more encompassing view. Einstein employed certain images to convey his theory of general relativity and there is no *general* objection to that procedure. Plato's case, however, is different. For, when one consults *the whole formulated view* of **DL** in order to grasp the significance of the image-part of **DL**, one

finds that mere images, such as that image-part of **DL**, are inadequate to covey that whole **DL**-view. The image-part of **DL** purports to represent the meaning of **DL**, but the whole **DL**-view implies that that image-part does *not* adequately represent the meaning of **DL**! But one is not done yet. Since the whole view conveyed by **DL** implies that the image-part of **DL** does *not* adequately represent the whole **DL**-view, one must infer that the thesis of the image-part of **DL** (that images are inadequate representations of the truth) is itself inadequate. But that means that the thesis of the image-part that such images are an inadequate means to convey the truth is adequate after all! Once again, this refers one back to the whole **DL**-view, which, again, informs us that such images *are* inadequate … and so on. One is caught in a circular dialectical "movement" from part to whole, back to the part again, back to the whole again *ad infinitum*. The appearance of this dialectical *movement* at just this place in **DL** should not be surprising. Plato calls the most superior kind of knowledge in **DL** "dialectics" and describe a *movement* from the perceptible images to "the beginning of the whole" and "back down" to the images again (Plato 1968*, Rep.* 511b-c). Since **AOC** and **LOL** share the same basic structure as **DL**, a similar dialectical movement and hermeneutical circle is present in these passages as well.

In conclusion, whereas the orthodox view is that Plato is, in **DL**, **AOC**, and **LOL**, expressing some of his most profound philosophical "theories," he is actually doing something quite different. He is trying to show that the attempt by finite beings to theorize about the relation between their finite "parts" (including their image-parts) and the transcendent whole leads to the simultaneous necessity, and impossibility, of transgressing the limits of language—resulting in a logical paradox analogous to **SLP**. Thus, Plato's real "message" in **DL**, **AOC** and **LOL** does *not* consist in the statement of a theory about the relation between perceptible particulars and transcendent Forms. It rather tries to show that the attempt by finite beings such as our self to state such theories produces a paradox-generating hermeneutical circle. Indeed, one might say that the fact that this paradox-generating hermeneutical circle

occurs at these fundamental points in the dialogues, at the limits of finite language and thought, *is* the real message in **DL**, **AOC** and **LOL**. Perhaps that hermeneutical circle at the very base of the attempt to understand reality is also one of those "footnotes" to Plato to which Whitehead referred?[21]

**NOTES**

[1] See also Hofstadter (1999, 24) and Spade and Read (2009, § 1.2).
[2] It is not clear either that Epimenides himself, or St. Paul, in his reference to Epimenides' statement in his *Epistle to Titus*, recognized its paradoxical character (Kneale and Kneale 1978, 28).
[3] As becomes important later, paraconsistent logics see this as a possible view (Beall and Glanzberg 2011, §§ 4.1-4.1.1). Such views were not, however, current in Plato's time, unless, perhaps, one counts some of the Sophists—but if the present paper is correct this sort of logic may be *implicit* in Plato.
[4] This is not to deny that, with some ingenuity, some of these exotic species of **LP** *might* also be found in Plato. I do believe that something like **CLP** is found in Plato's works but that is a matter for another paper.
[5] For a modern formulation of the Epiminides paradox see Sorenson (2005).
[6] For a good discussion of the paradoxes of self-reference see Barwise and Etchemendy (1989).
[7] Brumbaugh (1981, 143-147) states that BC represents physical objects and human societies . In fact, Plato identifies the items in BC as animals, plants and artifacts (Plato 1968, *Rep.* 510a)—roughly, matter organized by mind (See Patterson 1985, 27), but this is a nicety for another occasion.
[8] Although each level is an image of the level above it, something is lost in the copying from one level to the lower ones, i.e., Helen may be beautiful but she is not nearly so beautiful as Beauty-Itself.
[9] The resemblance-claim is that items at one level are "likenesses" of items at the next (Plato 1968, *Rep*. 510a-b). In fact, the resemblance claim is more complicated (Patterson 1985, 29-31; White 1976, 72, 84 n 42), but this particular issue is not essential to the present paper.
[10] **DL** is actually presented to the reader an image of an image of an image, i.e., Plato's image in written words of Socrates' image in spoken words of an image drawn on some surface. With this artistic device Plato emphasizes just how *enormously* distant **DL** is from conveying adequate truth.
[11] Consider, for example, Plato's transformation of the old Pythagorean views into his views in the *Timaeus* (Plato 1997a).
[12] One might object that **Z** does *not* generate a paradox analogous to **SLP** because it can be true that it is profoundly misleading that **Z** is profoundly misleading without its being the case that **Z** is *false*. However, **Z** does not merely say that **Z** is profoundly misleading. **Z** says that **Z** is profoundly *metaphysically and epistemologically* misleading and when one reckons in the *details* of Plato's metaphysical and epistemological views in **DL** one gets a version to **SLP**. For example, part of the metaphysical picture involved in

**DL's** image of the relation between the Forms and the perceptible world is that the Forms are like spatial and temporal individuals, e.g., an individual red patch resembles a universal. But the red patch is in space and time while the Form of redness is non-spatial and non-temporal (Wedberg 1971, 48). Thus, **Z** is not merely profoundly metaphysically and epistemologically misleading in some *general sense*. **Z** is profoundly metaphysically and epistemologically misleading in that *it asserts or implies literal falsehoods of the Forms*, some of which falsehoods, by the way, are similar to Parmenides' criticisms of the theory of Forms in the *Parmenides* (Plato 1997 d).

[13] This is not meant to imply that Plato knew of Eubulides' **SLP**, although he may have (Sorenson 2005, 102). If Plato did not know of it, this only means that Plato independently formulated something *analogous* to it.

[14] The idea that language about the divine is inherently paradoxical is found in religious Platonists such as Augustine (See O'Donnell 1985, 20-24 and O'Donnell 1994).

[15] Aquinas, like many others, has failed to see this and misunderstood Plato as a straightforward theorist of the Forms. In *Summa Theologica* (Aquinas 1997, Q 88. Art. 1) Aquinas states the Plato thought that "immaterial substances" can be known by us, and known first, because the "immaterial Forms" are the "proper objects" of the human intellect. By contrast, Aquinas himself holds that human intelligence "in the present state of life" is suited only to understand material things, with the consequence that human beings cannot understand "separate immaterial substances by themselves." But Aquinas fails to see that Plato *shares* his reservations about the capacity of human minds in the present life adequately to cognize immaterial existences because he fails to recognize the paradox in Plato's formulations of **DL**, **AOC**, and **LOL**. These do not constitute a *theory* of Forms *per se*, but are, roughly, what Aquinas (1997, Q12. Art 3. Reply Obj. 3) calls a "vision of the imagination" employing "some mode of likeness" (See also Q88. Art 3. Reply Obj. 3). Aquinas (1997, Q12. Art 4) did allow that human beings *can* know "incorporeal substances", but held that this is possible, "in the present life", *not by nature, but only by grace*, an option not available to Plato. For, Plato finds himself in the position of a finite natural intelligence, without the benefit of God's grace to remedy his deficit, attempting to comprehend the supernatural Forms, *and it is that which generates the paradox in* **DL**, **AOC** and **LOL**.

[16] The ideas that human thought, and, in some sense, reality its self, is inherently paradoxical, and that this is deeply illuminating, also appears in certain forms in Kant and Hegel (Taylor 1975, 529-30).

[17] Although hermeneutics is often thought of as a modern development the word "hermeneutics" is a modern Latinized version of the word *hermeneutike* that is first found in several of Plato's works—although its precise intended meaning in Plato is controversial (Grondin 1994, 21-23).

[18] It would not be inappropriate to recall the burst of philosophical creativity occasioned by Gödel's proof that there can be no consistent axiomatic system of arithmetic (Raatikainen 2015, §§ 4 and 6).

[19] See Grodin's (1994, 21-23) discussion of Schleiermacher view that Plato's real views might be "divined".

[20] The expression is borrowed from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (4.022). See McDonough (1986, Chap. VI).
[21] See note 17 above.

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# False Memories and Reproductive Imagination: Ricoeur's Phenomenology of Memory

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**Abstract**

In cognitive psychology, a false memory refers to a fabricated or distorted recollection of an event that did not actually happen. Both 'memory-distortion' and 'false memory creation' refer to the processes of recollection in which the recollected events are not actually happened. This paper has three aims: (1) to examine Ricoeur's analysis of memory and imagination; (2) to explain and reinforce the constructive role of memory; (3) to show in what manner the first two aims lead to the conclusion that the phenomena of 'distorted or false memory creation' are reproductive because the nature of recollection is constructive in the sense of representation of past. In this regard, Ricoeur's trajectory not only displaces the essential structure of memory and imagination behind the curtain of their distinction and connection, but also contributes to the debates in cognitive psychology.

**Keywords**: Ricoeur, phenomenology, memory, imagination, schematism false memory creation.

## Introduction

E. F. Loftus, in "Creating False Memories", argues that "false memories are constructed by combining actual memories with the content of suggestions received from others" (1997, 77). False memory creation is equivalent to memory distortion in the sense that the content of suggestions received from others could distort the original memory and lead to false or distorted memory. British psychologists F. Bartlett shares the same thesis that false memory is constructed. This paper aims at arguing that, through Ricoeur's analysis of imagination and memory, we could find that imagination must be involved in the

process of recollection. It is the very meaning of the constructive role of memory. However, the imagination involved is not productive imagination, but reproductive imagination. Although false memory creation and memory-distortion consists of content that did not happen, false memory creation and memory distortion, is a kind of remembering, are also created by reproductive imagination. To make sense of this argument, it is necessary to understand how reproductive imagination creates false or precisely how imagination works together in memory. Through Ricoeur's insight, I will argue that memory is apprehended in accordance with its aim of faithfully representing the past. It is in term of representation what is remembered is given as an image of what previously was seen, heard, experienced, learned and acquired. Recognition makes memory 'visible' and understandable. It brings up 'memory-image' from 'pure memory' through emplotment. Recollection necessarily involves imagination but the imagination involved can never be productive. All these explicate how the constructive role of memory is.

Before moving on to the debate, some important concepts are necessarily clarified. The term of 'false memory creation' is reserved for cases in which a subject has a false belief about the past that is *experienced as memory*. In these cases, the subject believes that he is directly remembering what has been in the past (Lampinen, Neuschatz and Payne 1997, 181-2). To clarify the term, we could draw a distinction between 'false memory creation' and 'false memory'. The latter refers to the incorrect belief about a past event, but the former refers to *the process and experience* of creating 'not-memory' as 'memory'. This distinction can be found in Husserl and Ricoeur's phenomenology. In Husserl's noetic-noematic distinction, remembering can be distinguished into the act of remembering and the remembered. In Ricoeur's distinction, they are "memory as intention" (*la mémoire*) and "memories as the thing intended" (*le souvenir*) (Ricoeur 2004, 22).

Further, we may draw a distinction between 'false memory creation' and 'lying'. The person is unaware that the information is false, on the one hand; and he or she experiences the false information as memory, on the other hand

(Moscovitch, 1989; 1995). For the person who creates false memory, they do not intentionally deceive someone and false memory or distorted memory can also seem to be coherent and consistent. However, lying does not involve memory disturbance as the person intentionally changes the information in order to deceive someone. Let's consider a pathological case introduced by psychologist Schacter. He finds that in certain cases of frontal lobe damage, failures of source memory are accompanied by extensive and even bizarre confabulations - false recollections of event that did not occur and could not have occurred. For example, a sixty years old man got married with his wife for over thirty years; and they had four children aged from twenty-two to thirty-two. However, the man insisted that he and his wife had been married for four months only and their children were born within these four months. In fact, he could correctly tell the number of children they had and also their age. When he was asked how it was possible for them to have four big children in this four months' time, he had a ready response: "they're adopted" (Schacter, 1996, 119-120). In the patient's view, his "memories" is very vivid and precise, and he has no intentional to tell lie. Therefore, Moscovitch argues that "what distinguishes confabulation from lying is that typically there is no intent to deceive and the patient is unaware of the falsehoods. It is an 'honest lying'" (Moscovitch, 1995, 226).

There are three sections in the paper. In section one, the Gestalt psychological account are explained. In section two, Ricoeur's eidetic analyses of memory and imagination are elaborated, and the constructive role of memory is explained. In section three, I argue that the phenomena of distorted and false memory are created by reproductive imagination through the very distinction between productive and reproductive imagination.

## 1. The constructive role of memory: from the perspective of Gestalt psychology

British psychologist F. Bartlett finds that people rarely recall all of the events in the story accurately. They may fit

their expectations or imaginations of what should have happened although these are not part of the original story (Bartlett, 1932). Schacter points out that according to Bartlett's view, "memories are imaginative reconstructions of past events that are heavily influenced by the rememberer's pre-existing knowledge structures or schemas" (Schacter, 1995, 9). U. G. Neisser further develops Bartlett's insight. He explains how recollection has the constructive role. Past events are reconstructed by pre-existing knowledge and schemas, through which fragment of episodic memories are gathered together. He draws an analogical argument for his claim. His argument is that the reconstruction of a dinosaur from fragmentary fossil remains is similar to the reconstruction of a unity of memory from fragmentary memories remain. And a palaeontologist is similar to a rememberer. The similarities of remembering and the work of palaeontology are that both are acts of reconstruction; what are reconstructed in both cases are fragmentary instead of a complete work and the final products are absent in the very beginning (Neisser, 1967). He concludes that all memories are necessarily reconstructed through imagination. And the process of imagination often consists of knowledge that is not part of a specific event. Thus, the fundamental nature of memory is constructive. This nature leads memory to the other nature of memory, namely distortive and inaccurate. Recent research argues that the formations of memory-distortion and false memory creation are created by imagination through the adoption of the conclusion deduced from Bartlett and Neisser. Johnson and Suengas argue that if recollection of 'external events' and imagination are confused in certain conditions, thereby producing distorted memories. Conducting some experiment on students, they find "people embellish imagined events more than perceived events when recalling orally. If so, this would tend to make memories for perceived and imagined events appear more similar." (Johnson & Suengas 1989, 108) In their account, they make use of Bartlett's doctrine of schemas to illustrate the constructive nature of memory. If we recollect the past events, but the schemas confuse the imagined events and the perceived events, then distorted memories or false memory would be created.

Take an example in their experiments, some young children are influenced by misleading suggestions to remember events that have never happened. Then they are asked to tell the story of the past events. Finally, they are not convinced by debriefing that the memories are incorrect. They believe what they remember are real. According to Gestalt account, those young children create false memory and their memories are distorted because their schemas are affected by others. Although Gestalt account addresses the constructive nature of memory with the doctrine of schemas, there is no precise and clear illustration on schemas. Since the doctrine of schemas is not illuminated, how schemas can contribute to the constructive role of memory is not clarified.

Gestalt's accounts of memory-distortion and false memory creation claims that memory has the constructive role. The constructive role of memory is the condition of possibility for memory-distortion and false memory creation. Gestalt's account emphasizes the schemas. However, how can the doctrines of 'schemas' explain the constructive role of memory is? If the explanation is neglected, then Gestalt seems to simply explain away how constructive memory is. Therefore, it is difficult to understand how imagination constructs memory and whether false memory or distorted memory are created by reproductive.

## 2. Ricoeur's analysis of memory and imagination

### *2.1 The connection between memory and imagination*

Ricoeur draws several resources from Husserl. First, he follows that memory can be divided into primary memory (retention) and secondary memory (recollection or remembering). On the one hand, primary memory is opposite to secondary memory. "Retention still hangs onto the perception of the moment" (Ricoeur 2004, 35). Perception is a mode of presentation (*Gegenwärtigung*) that the things perceived are directly present. Retention is the continuous modification of the perception of the moment. On the other hand, secondary memory "is no longer presentation at all; it is presentification or re-presentation. Second, he follows that both imagination and secondary memory

are presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*) which is opposite to presentation which refers to perception. Both of them share in intuitivity but differ from perception by the non-presentation of their object" (Ricoeur 1991b, 119).

Ricoeur develops Husserl's analysis of presentification. In Husserl's understanding, *Vergegenwärtigung* does not signify the giving again of an original in the manner of a copy. The object presentificated is 'reproduced' as itself irreal or not actual. Although Husserl, in *HUA X* under the heading of "reproductive modification", discusses the notion of reproduction, his main aim is to draw the distinction between *Gegenwärtigung* and *Vergegenwärtigung* instead of introducing a detail analysis of reproduction. Ricoeur argues "reproduction is classified among the mode of imagination" (Ricoeur 2004, 35). Ricoeur replenishes the notion of reproduction that there are two 'ways' of reproduction, namely the way of metaphor and the way of recognition. He introduces that reproduction can be distinguished into "on the level of style, the way of metaphor; on the level of vision, the way of recognition (*reconnaissance*). In return, metaphor and recognition make explicit the relation upon which the impression regained is itself constructed, the relation between life and literature" (Ricoeur 1991e, 380). Both ways of reproductions are construction of impression. J. Henriksen, *in Desire, Gift, and Recognition: Christology and Postmodern Philosophy*, brings an important remark about Ricoeur's doctrine of recognition. Varieties of temporalization accompany varieties of change, and these varieties of change and temporalization constitute the occasion for identification and recognition. This indicates that recognition closely relates to the very condition of history, namely temporality. The flexibility of recognition is based on possibility of change in time (56). Recognition itself is based on temporality, that is, the flow of time. Precisely, "the concrete act by which we grasp the past in present is recognition." (Ricoeur 2004, 433) That's why Ricoeur claims that "the moment of recollection is then the moment of recognition (Ricoeur 2004, 41).

But what do we recognize in the moment of recollection? Ricoeur draws resources from Bergson's *Matter and Memory*. In Bergson's view, there is a kind of memory called "intermediary

or mixed memory" (Ricoeur 2004, 54). It is also called memory-image, half-way between 'pure memory' and memory re-established in perception, half-way between fiction and hallucination. What is pure memory? What is memory-image? What is the difference between the two? Pure memory refers to retention which is the sedimentation of the past experience. Ricoeur defines that a pure memory that has not yet been put into image does exist (Ricoeur 2004, 51) and not yet visible. Memory-image is the representational form of pure memory. To recollect the past experience, the pure memory 'transforms' into memory-image. For example, when we pass through the library, the things passed by become our pure memory which is the sedimentation. If we want to thematizes or recollect what we experienced in the past, then we have to transform the sedimentation the memory-image of what we experienced in the past. It carries memory back so to speak into a region of presence similar to that of perception. But memory-image, in this sense, is not like a picture or a painting, but something 'placing-before-the-eyes'. In Bergson's view, the first record, in the form of memory-images "neglects no detail". "It [the first record] is equally constitutive of the reflective phase, or as we have called it, the declarative phase of remembering" (Ricoeur 2004, 42). Ricoeur does not completely agree with Bergson's view as forgetfulness is one of the constitutive components of memory.[1] Memory-image does not record all details. In a contrary, he suggests memory-image is as a mixed form of imagination and recognition in the feeling that you have previously experienced exactly the same thing as you are experiencing now. He claims that,

> "…at the stage where recognition blossoms in the feeling of *déjà-vu*-corresponded to an intermediary form of imagination, half-way between fiction and hallucination, namely, the 'image' component of the memory-image (Ricoeur 2004, 54).

As the function of imagination that makes visible, the 'image' component of the memory-image is then 'placing before the eyes'. It is important to note that the function of the imagination consists in 'placing (something) before the eyes,' a function that can be termed ostensive: this is an imagination that shows, gives to seen, makes visible". What Ricoeur wants

to argue is that "memory, reduced to recall, thus operates in the wake of imagination" (Ricoeur 2004, 5). The operation of recollection needs the cooperation of imagination. The operation of recollection is that "the return of a memory can only take place in the mode of becoming-an-image" (Ricoeur 2004, 7). Although recollection involves imagination, the image, pure and simple, will not be referred to the past unless, indeed, it was in the past that I sought it. To imagine is not to remember as imagination does not tend to refer to the past (Ricoeur 2004, 52). To fully understand how memory involves imagination, two questions have to be explored: (1) how does imagination 'bring up' memory-image from pure memory? (2) How does imagination make memory understandable through narrating it?

### *2.2 Emplotment, Schematism and memory-image*

Emplotment is the schema to 'bring up' memory-image from pure memory. Ricoeur notes that "this emplotment is its intelligible schema [épure]. It imitates in that it is intelligible" (Ricoeur 1991c, 143). It is clear that emplotment is the intelligible schema of a replica of action. Memory is intelligible or understandable if and only if emplotment configures the past event. Emplotment configures the past event with plot, through which expressions like 'then', 'earlier', 'later' are the relation suggested to the phases of the past event

What is plot? "The plot is the literary form of this coordination" (Ricoeur 2004, 243). Ricoeur explains that "what it itself brings is what I have called a synthesis of the heterogeneous, in order to speak of the coordination between multiple events, or between causes, intentions, and also accidents within a single meaningful unity" (Ricoeur 2004, 243). How could the plot be the literary form of the coordination between multiple events? Ricoeur draws resources from Aristotle that "plot functions as the narrative matrix. This emphasis on narrative as plot has three advantages": first, it provides us with a structure which could be common to both historical and fictional narratives. Second, plot may be seen as pertaining to the sense of narrative as distinct from its reference. Third, a plot is a way of connecting event and story. A story is made out of

events, to the extent that plot makes events into a story (Ricoeur 1991a, 105-6).

The third advantage would be the most significant in Ricoeur's analysis. He elaborates that "what Aristotle calls plot is not a static structure but an operation, an integrating process" which is "a totality which can be said to be at once concordant and discordant" (Ricoeur 1991f, 21).This integrative function of the narrative form results from the distance it takes in regard to mere chronological succession in terms of before and after, of the type *veni, vidi, vici*. As a meaningful unity, the plot is capable of articulating structures and events within one and the same configuration (Ricoeur 2004, 246).

This configuration is governed by a schematization.[2] To explain the connection, he draws resources from Kant's doctrine of schematism.[3] It is debatable that how we can faithfully understand Kant's schematism. But Ricoeur does not completely follow Kant's doctrine. Therefore, it is mistaken if we simply treat Ricoeur's as the same as Kant's.[4] To bear a point in mind, Ricoeur's doctrine may not commit the same obstacles in Kant's philosophy. Ricoeur says in "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality":

> "Kant has opened in the theory of schematism when he defined the schema as 'a universal procedure of imagination in providing an image for a concept…But if one starts with the schema-image, one could understand that it is in producing some images that the predicative assimilation is schematized" (Ricoeur 1991b, 126).

Ricoeur agrees that schema is not image, but a procedure of imagination in providing the schema-image for a concept. What does it mean? We may use Kant's elaboration to understand the theory of schematism works as a universal procedure of imagination in providing an image for a concept. He argues that no image of particular triangle would ever be adequate to the concept of it as it would not attain the generality of the concept, which consists of all triangles like right angle or isosceles triangle. The schema of triangle signifies a *rule of the synthesis* of the imagination with which my imagination can specify the shape of a triangle in general, without being restricted to any particular shape that experience offers me (Kant 2007, A141). In Kant's view, categories are "pure concept

of the understanding" and "internalized". Schematism is "the procedure of understanding" (*Verfahren des Verstandes*) through which the categories or the pure concepts of human understanding find their way to concrete application: "application […] to appearance (*Anwendung* […] *auf Erscheinungen*)." (Kant 2007, A138-141/B177-181) It means that the procedure of schematism applies the categories, which are "pure" to appearances, which are "sensible". The procedure demonstrates how the universal, intellectual categories relate to particular, sensible manifold. It makes something as appearance. In Ricoeur's view, the significance of schematism is producing images as Kant's schematism as "the method for producing images" (Ricoeur 2004, 253). He explains

> "Imagining is first and foremost restricting semantic fields…In this we find what is essential to the Kantian theory of schematism. Schematism, Kant said, is a method of giving an image to a concept. And again, schematism is a rule of producing images…Like the Kantian schema, it gives an image to an emerging meaning. Before it is a faded perception, the image is an emerging meaning" (Ricoeur 1994, 122).

Schematism, in Ricoeur's view, has two functions. First, it is a rule of producing images. Second, it is a method of giving an image. To give an image that the predicative assimilation is schematized to a concept, schematism reformulates pure concepts of understanding in terms of time. For example, the category "substance" is schematized under the rule of "the permanence of the real in time" and "causality" is schematized under the rule of "the necessary succession of cause and effect in time" (Kant 2007, A143/B183). With this schematic procedure, the given manifolds of inner sense in the realm of sensibility can be synthesized with the pure concepts of understanding (schema-image) and rendered understandable. Thus, the schema-images are the form for recognizing a unity or understanding the meaning of sensible manifold. Without schema-image and schematism, the unity is impossible and the meaning of it cannot be understandable. Therefore, schematism offers the schema-images for the unity of meaning and its understanding. Following this interpretation, memory-image is "created"

through schematism. He draws resources from Bergson's second chapter of *Matter and Memory* and interprets,

> "He says that pure memory is virtual and has to be brought back into the field of consciousness as an image…We are dealing with memory-images where imagination serves as a kind of mise-en-scène of the past" (Kearney & Cooley 1999, 15-6).

The existence of a pure memory is a virtual state of the representation of the past, prior to its becoming an image in the mixed form of memory image. At that time, the "pure" memory is retained without declared recognition. Following the phases of configuration governed by schematism, categories of plot like 'the beginning', 'the middle' and 'the end' are applied to a pure memory.[5] Then a pure memory moves out of its virtual state and passes into its actual state; at that time, all that retained out attention is the memory's becoming-an-image, namely memory-image. It applies a kind of *mise-en-scène* to the pure memory. It demonstrates how 'pure memory' is brought back into the field consciousness as memory-image. Through the procedure, memory is made 'visible' again through memory-images. Thus, the evocation of a structure of domination can be incorporated into the narrative of an event. The structure as a phenomenon of the long time span through the narrative becomes the condition of possibility of the event (Ricoeur 2004, 246). Ricoeur further elaborates,

> "All narratives combine in various proportions, two dimensions – one chronological and the other non-chronological. The first may be called the episodic dimension. This dimension characterizes the story as made out of events. The second is the configurational dimension, according to which the plot construes significant whole outs of scattered events…this to be the act of the plot, as eliciting a pattern from a succession…To tell and to follow a story is already to reflect upon events in order to encompass them in successive wholes" (Ricoeur 1991a, 106).

There are two dimensions of narratives. The first is the episodic dimension which characterizes the story as made out of events; the second is the configurational dimension which construes a successive whole out of scattered events according to the plot. Then how the act of configuration elicits a story as successive wholes? On the one hand, Ricoeur argues that thanks to episodic dimension, the art of telling uses expressions like

'then', 'earlier', 'later'… to suggest a relation of exteriority between phases of the action. On the other hand, thanks to the configuration dimension, the plot may be translated into one 'thought' or 'theme' (*dianoia*). Configuration operation is an emplotment.[6] Configuration allows us to read the end in the beginning and the beginning in the end. In that way, a plot establishes human action not only within time, but within memory. He then concludes that "memory, accordingly, repeats the course of events according to an order which is the counterpart of time as stretching-along between a beginning and an end" (Ricoeur 1991a, 111). Through the emplotment, it makes the various events or incidents into a story. The plot is mediation between the events and the told story. It organizes the events into an intelligible whole. The events are qualified as an event with a theme by its contribution to the progression of the plot. As Kearney says, "narrative provides us with figural reconstruction of the past that enables us to see and hear things long since gone" (Kearney 2008, 77).

But the relation suggested by the plot is exterior. It is not intrinsic properties of the past event. Telling stories and writing history consists of the relation of exteriority between the phases of the past event instead of a mere copy of the past events. Take an example, if a witness is asked to recollect the memory about the murder case in MRT in 21/5/2014. The witness would firstly select the fragmentary episodes and then producing memory-image through emplotment. He may orally express the phases of the past event he articulated: a man ran into MRT, and then use a weapon to kill the innocent. Ricoeur points out that "by telling stories and writing history we provide 'shape' to what remains chaotic, obscure, and mute" (Ricoeur 1991a, 115). One of the functions of imagination is to put memories before our eyes (Kearney & Dooley 1999, 15). He clearly explicates that the reality of history of made 'visible' again through images; and this makes memory a reproduction, a sort of second production (Kearney & Cooley 1999, 15-6). Thus, the constructive role of memory is explained and reinforced.

## 3. 'Memory-distortion' or 'false memory' and reproductive or productive imagination

If retention is our ontological structure, the past events should be retained. If the past events are retained, then we should remember everything well in order. How could false memory creation be possible? It is important to understand that forgetting is our ontological structure as well. In Memory, History, Forgetting, Ricoeur thematizes the essential structure of forgetting. Ricoeur argues that forgetting serve as both "reserve" and "deletion" (Ricoeur 2004, 553). Without forgetting, recollection is impossible. The forgetting which conditions remembering is related to the past as having been. Forgetting has a positive meaning insofar as having been prevails over being no longer in the meaning attached to the idea of the past. Having been makes forgetting the immemorial resource offered to the work of remembering (Ricoeur 2004, 443). Therefore, this ontological structure provides the condition of possibility for recollection or remembering as well as false memory creation.

*Are the phenomena of 'memory-distortion' and 'false memory creation' created by reproductive imagination or productive imagination*? To answer the question above, it is necessary to understand Ricoeur's distinction between productive and reproductive imagination.

### *3.1 The distinction between productive and reproductive imagination*

Ricoeur argues "the denial of the primacy of the original opens rather new ways of referring to reality for the image because fiction do not refer in a 'reproductive' way to reality as already given, they may refer in a 'productive' way to reality as intimated by the fiction" (Ricoeur 1991b, 121). G. Taylor clearly points out that the model of original and copy exemplifies reproductive imagination as the image as copy is at best derivative from the original or reality. But productive imagination is not duplicative of or not determined by an original as it expands our sense of reality and produces a new reality (Taylor 2006, 95-97). In reproductive imagination, the

primacy of the original is still emphasized but the primacy of the original is denied in productive imagination.

How is the primacy of the original denied? That fiction changes reality, in the sense that it both 'invents' and 'discovers' it. "It is that new realities become open to us and old worlds are made new" (Ricoeur 1991b, 135). Ricoeur further describes that "what is articulated in this way is what I call second-order reference and which in reality is the primordial reference" (Ricoeur 1994, 124). The construction of second-order reference is called 'reference effect' or 'meaning effects'. "This new reference effect is nothing other than the power of fiction to redescribe reality" as it opens up and unfold new dimensions of reality, suspending our belief in an earlier description (Ricoeur 1994, 124). That is why Ricoeur concludes the productive imagination is "a free play of possibilities in a state of uninvolvement with respect to the world of perception or action. It is in this state of uninvolvement that we try out new ideas, new ways of being in the world" (Ricoeur 1994, 123).[7]

### *3.2 Memory-image, memory-distortion and false memory creation*

If we follow Ricoeur's analyses, the procedure of imagination descending from 'pure memory' to memory-image, memory-image is possible because of the procedure of schematism and emplotment in which categories of plot (the beginning, the middle, the end…) are applied to selected fragmentary episodes. This voiding was nascent in 'placing before the eyes' considered as 'putting into images,' the putting-on stage constitutive of the memory-image (Ricoeur 2004, 53). It is in term of representation what is remembered is given as an image of what previously was seen, heard, experienced, learned and acquired. Therefore, the constructive role of memory is explained and confirmed. Ricoeur concludes that "history makes use of fiction and fiction of history as each refigure time" (Ricoeur 1991d, 353).

As recollection, by nature, has the constructive character, it is possible to dramatize the thematic of the imagination in the same way by organizing it in relation to the two poles of fiction and hallucination. He further indicates that

"by moving to the pole of hallucination, we uncover the pitfall of the imaginary for memory" (Ricoeur 2004, 53). More importantly, Ricoeur states that "a phenomenology of memory cannot fail to recognize what we have just called the *pitfall of the imaginary* constitutes a sort of weakness, a discredit, a loss of reliability for memory" (Ricoeur 2004, 54). He discovers the close connection between secondary memory and imagination that the pitfall of the imaginary constitutes a sort of weakness, a discredit, a loss of reliability for secondary memory. The phenomena of memory-distortion and false memory creation are always possible as the interplay between presentification by which memory-image is possible and makes memory "visible" and "understandable". There is no guarantee that the image is actually the representation of the past. Imagination could also move in the direction of mere fiction. As Ricoeur claims, "the imagination, freed from its service to the past, has taken the place of memory. The past, the absent with respect to the history that recounts it, constitutes the other limit of this ambitious mnemoteachnics, along with forgetfulness." (Ricoeur 2004, 66-67).

### *3.3 Distorted memory and false memory are created by reproductive imagination*

As mentioned in part one, Bartlett offers an account of memory-distortion and false memory creation. He and his followers address the constructive nature of memory with the doctrine of schemas. Past events are reconstructed by pre-existing knowledge and schemas, through which fragment of episodic memories are gathered together. However, how schemas reconstruct past event and makes memory "visible" is unthematized. Therefore, they can hardly explain away the constructive role of memory and answer whether the phenomena of memory-distortion and false memory creation are created by reproductive imagination.

Memory-image is not only recognized as an image already lived, but also an image of the past in which is configured with emplotment. In this sense, there are two ways of memorial illusion.[8] First, if the fragmentary episodes are similar. A false fragmentary past event is 'implanted' into

similar fragmentary past events and recognized under a theme. For example, I could remember the deadline of this conference is 25 May, but in fact I mixed up the deadline of final paper in one of my course. The selection and gathering may lead to mistake. Second, the order of the fragmentary past events may be mistaken. For example, I could remember during dinner, I had a toast, then sushi, then apple…But I was mistaken that I had apple before, toast and sushi. In this sense, it seems that the procedure imagination involved in false memory or distorted memory produces a new reality in which the false memory or distorted memory is present as the past.

However, it is important to bear in mind that memory could never deny the primacy of the original like what productive imagination does. In all kinds of recollection, it marks the temporal position as the memory-image is "dated". If a memory is an image in this sense, it contains a positional dimension that, from this point of view, brings it closer to the original. Fictional entities "does not depict but itself off from the real, memories posit past things; whereas the depicted still has one foot in presentation as indirect presentation, fiction and the pretend are situated radically outside of presentation" (Ricoeur 2004, 48).

There are two ways to understand the differences. First, recollection has temporal character or temporal mark, imagination does not have it. Ricoeur points out that,

> "The difference between imagination and recollection depends on the answer to this question. It is then the positional dimension of recollection that makes the difference: "Recollection, on the other hand, posits what is reproduced and in this positing gives it a position in relation to the actually present now and to the sphere of the original temporal field to which the recollection itself belongs" (Ricoeur 2004, 36)

In recollection, it posits what is reproduced. What does recollection posit towards what is reproduced? Recollection marks the temporal mark to what is reproduced. The temporal is the 'pastness' of the past. Ricoeur, in "Narrated Time", distinguishes "the 'pastness' of the past in the two ways of *ne plus* (no longer) and of *encore* (still)" (Ricoeur 1991d, 347). Ways of *ne plus* (no longer) is in relation to the actually present now.

It is not simultaneous with the now, and it would make no sense to say that it is. Ways of *encore* (still) is in relation to the original temporal field to which the recollection itself belongs. The encore constitutes the ultimate referent intended across the ne plus. The pastness is absent in the actually present now but is reproduced in way of 'having once been actually experienced'. However, in imagination, the presence of what is imagined is 'as-if' without any temporal mark. An imaginary event does not occupy a fixed and determinate temporal position. For example, when I imagine that I play soccer with a famous soccer player, Messi. The imaginary scene cannot be placed in any direct temporal relation. Therefore, Ricoeur emphasizes that recollection, "then, is far from a Bergsonian vision of a duration free of all extension; instead, it confirms the dimensional character of time" (Ricoeur 1991e, 380). Also, "the latter [fantasy] lacks the present 'as it were' of the reproduced past" (Ricoeur 2004, 47).

Second, the reference of the intentionality of memory differs from that of the intentionality of imagination. Ricoeur points out that,

> "The eidetic difference between two aims, two intentionalities: the first, that of imagination, directed towards the fantastic, the fictional, the unreal, the possible, the utopian, and the other, that of memory, directed towards priority reality, priority constituting the temporal mark par excellence of the 'thing remembered,' of the 'remembered' as such" (Ricoeur 2004, 6).

Through eidetic analysis, the objects imagined and those recollected are explicated. What is imagined is in the field of unreal but what is recollected or memorized is in the field of absent but real. The intentionality of imagination is towards the fantastic, the fictional, the unreal, the possible, the utopian. And the intentionality of memory is towards priority reality although what is recollected is absent in relation the actually present now. "He stresses that "memories belong to the 'world of experience' in contrast to the 'worlds of fantasy', of irreality. The former is a common world, the latter are totally 'free', their horizon completely 'undetermined.' In principle, then, they cannot be confused or mistaken one for the other, whatever may be said regarding the complexing relations between

*Fiktum* and possibility, even their irreducibility to one another" (Ricoeur 2004, 49). Memory and imagination direct towards different world. Their references cannot be mistaken as they belong to different world. Ricoeur concludes that "imagination and memory have as a common trait the presence of the absent and as a different trait, on the one hand, the bracketing of any positing of reality and the vision of something unreal and, on the other, the positing of an earlier reality" (Ricoeur 2004, 44). Imagination has the positing of the vision of something unreal, but memory has the positing of an earlier reality. These mark the second difference between memory and imagination.

For those who create false memory or distorted memory, they consistently regard the memory as the original past event. Although the constructive role of memory leads to false memory creation as imagination involved creates a false and reproduced unity, they have no intention to create a new reality like what fiction does. Therefore, it is clear that memory, by nature, can be reproductive but never be productive in the sense that recollection as reproduction "assumes that the primary memory of a temporal object such as melody has 'disappeared' and that it comes back" (Ricoeur 2004, 35).

## Conclusion

Several psychologists like Loftut and Bartlett argue for the constructive role of memory. And this nature of memory leads to memory-distortion and false memory creation. However, how it is possible is unthematized. Through the examination of Ricoeur's analysis memory and imagination, the connection between memory and imagination is then clarified. Schematism is the condition of possibility for memory-image. Through the procedure of Schematism, memory is then visible as memory-image. Categories, are not object of original perception, are applied to the fragmentary past event. Therefore, the constructive role of memory is confirmed. More important, the procedure of imagination descending from 'pure memory' to memory-image, it is possible to dramatize the thematic of the imagination in the same way by organizing it in relation to the two poles of fiction and hallucination. As the possibility of the pitfall of the imaginary for memory, false

memory would be created or memory would be distorted. Although false memory creation and memory-distortion 'redescribes' the reality with a new order, the primacy of original is not denied. In this sense, we find that the phenomena of memory-distortion and false memory creation are created by reproduction as the nature of memory could never be productive.

**NOTES**

[1] Ricoeur disagrees with Bergson who argues that forgetting is in reality a complete logic of deletion as it does not mean that the forgetten event has not existed or disappear (Ricoeur 2004, 198). Ricoeur argues that forgetting serve as both "reserve" and "deletion" (Ricoeur 2004, 553). Forgetting is the ontological structure of a rememberer as it is the condition of possibility for remembrance. Only God does not forget as He knows everything. Human remembers the past event because the past event 'disappears' at the present moment. We forget the past event in order to live through it. For detail illustration, see Dessingué (2011, 168-178).

[2] Ricoeur addresses that this schematism is constituted within a history, a history that has all the characteristics of a tradition (Ricoeur 1991, 147). It is true that traditionality illumines the function of the narrative models or paradigms. In this paper, the phenomenon of traditionality cannot be clarified. But we should bear a point in mind that tradition is not the constraints of productive imagination. Productive imagination is transcategorical that it must transform existing categories and draw from existing reality. Therefore, productive imagination does not free from everything. It may be somehow within the boundary of tradition.

[3] Some philosophers argue that Kant's introduction of schematism is unnecessary. For example, G. Warnock argues that schematism aims at replying 'a pseudo-problem' (Warnock 1949, 77-82). H. Prichard shares the similar view (Prichard 1909, 249). However, some philosophers like E. Allison argues for the necessity of schematism as schematism is a procedure explaining how the faculty of understanding and the faculty of sensibility work together. Precisely, how the pure concept apply to sensible intuition (Allison 1983, 175-182). M. Heidegger, in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, also share the same view that schematism does have its importance as "all conceptual representing is a schematism" (71). This paper does not aim at discussing the debate, so the detail confrontation is not explained.

[4] For further details, Vanhoozer 1991, 34-54; Piercy 2011; Bourgeois 2008, 163-182.

[5] It is interesting enough that Kant does not talk about categories other than science. He introduces twelve categories only. Heidegger, in *Kant and*

*the Problem of Metaphysics*, critically examines Kant's doctrine of schematism and further develops his own schematism of life.

[6] In "Mimesis and Representation", Ricoeur analyses three levels of mimesis. Mimesis brings about an argumentation of meaning in the field of action (Ricoeur 1991c, 138). For further elaboration, please refer to *Time and Narrative*.

[7] Although the distinction between the two imaginations is clarified, we should not overestimate the distinction as the new referent in productive imagination is not created out of nothing. As G. Taylor explained, "the productive imagination is 'not something irrational," he says; "it must be categorical in order to be transcategorical. To be effective, the productive imagination must transform existing categories; it cannot exist totally outside and separate from them…must have elements of reproductive imagination, must draw from existing reality sufficiently so that its productive distance is not too great" (Taylor 2006, 97-8). It means that productive imagination have elements of reproductive imagination and cannot exist totally outside and separate from them.

[8] In *Hua XI*, Husserl illustrates his understanding of the two ways of memorial illusion and his solutions (192). His illustration mainly focuses on fulfilment, but does not explain the connection between memory and imagination.

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# Sentido y responsabilidad. Invitación a la fenomenología de Husserl

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**Abstract**

**Sense and Responsibility: Invitation to Husserl's Phenomenology**

The recovery of the problem of meaning and intellectual life in terms of responsibility are, as I try to argue, two questions from which the proposal of the Husserl's phenomenology can be reconstructed. A proposal that aims to revitalize the horizons of reason (on which depends the true meaning of human existence) that is, the philosophy that nurtured the West and why it's so classic and so genuine, so traditional and so contemporary too.

**Keywords**: phenomenology, teleology, sense, subjectivity, responsibility

## 1. *Racionalismo extraviado.* El sinsentido como causa de la crisis

La fenomenología quiere ser ciencia estricta, saber universal, filosofía primera. De modo que trata de restaurar un tipo de conocimiento como aquel con el que Grecia inauguró la cultura occidental. Busca ser una sabiduría plena que, como en los mejores tiempos, integre altas dosis de teoría lo suficientemente fundadas como para iluminar las grandes cuestiones prácticas, en este caso, la crisis en la que está sumida Europa. ¿Dónde se encuentra la raíz del problema?

La estrecha vinculación que se ha ido fraguando entre sabiduría, ciencia, técnica y progreso, una determinada concepción de la ciencia apegada al modelo positivista, la merma de las capacidades racionales reducidas a la observación, experimentación y verificación así como la consiguiente aniquilación de los otros *horizontes de la razón* de

cuya conquista depende el humanismo que ha contribuido decisivamente a la forja de Europa, son los hitos generadores de la situación crítica en la que está inmerso Occidente[1]. "A pesar de tanta ciencia, tan verdadera, tan fecunda y central de nuestra vida, a la que tantos de los mejores afanes humanos se han consagrado, el intelectual de hoy, si es sincero, se encuentra rodeado de confusión, desorientado e íntimamente descontento consigo mismo. No será, naturalmente, por el resultado de su saber". (Zubiri 1974, 5)

En mi opinión, uno de los grandes peligros que observa Husserl es que, esta crisis no da síntomas aparentes: el progreso es ya imparable, el avance de las ciencias es innegable y la mejora de las condiciones de vida parece indiscutible. ¿De qué crisis estamos hablando entonces? ¿Es pertinente hablar de crisis de la ciencia ante el reconocimiento público de su éxito? He aquí la tarea de la fenomenología: diagnosticar, contra todo pronóstico, una enfermedad de la razón que no sólo entorpece el prometido progreso humano sino que va contra el propio hombre. En un mundo reglado y legislado donde el conocimiento genuino y exclusivo de las ciencias explica los hechos y predice resultados, ¿cuál es el lugar de la filosofía? Sin duda, ninguno. La filosofía ha consistido sólo en una amalgama de puntos de vista, de opiniones discutibles sin fin. Las ciencias, mientras tanto, han sido capaces de resolver los interrogantes que hasta ahora formaban parte del corpus filosófico y se han atribuido la capacidad de declarar sinsentidos a todas aquellas cuestiones que sobrepasaban las estrechas fronteras de su racionalidad positiva. Las ciencias positivas tienen la pretensión no sólo de adecuar la observación a la realidad observada sino más aún, volver efectivo el trato con la misma mediante una anticipación de hechos que garanticen un cierto dominio del mundo. La filosofía necesariamente ha entrado en crisis porque, evidentemente, parece haber sido superada[2].

La gravedad del asunto es que, la crisis de la propia filosofía afecta medularmente al sentido global de la vida humana, *a su existencia toda.* Y es esta estrecha vinculación entre filosofía y humanismo la que provoca que, sin filosofía, sea imposible encontrar un sentido al mundo, a la historia, a la libertad, o lo que es lo mismo, que no podamos por menos que

perder, *"la fe en la capacidad y posibilidad del hombre de conferir a su existencia humana, individual y general, un sentido racional."* (Husserl 1991, 13) De ahí la necesidad de restaurar la concepción de la filosofía como, "*movimiento histórico de revelación de la razón universal, connatural – innata- a la humanidad en cuanto tal"* (Husserl 1991, 16). Una restauración que tiene venir ahora de manos de la fenomenología trascendental en la medida en que pone en cuestión la raíz del modelo racional que alimenta y sostiene a las ciencias europeas provocadoras de esta decadencia de tamañas consecuencias: la actitud natural que las ha originado. Es evidente que esta apuesta sin tapujos por la razón como dimensión constituyente de lo humano no es una opción genuina de la fenomenología. De hecho, la diferencia específica del hombre con respecto al animal se da exactamente en el momento en el que la humanidad *"no quiere ni puede vivir sino en la libre conformación de su existencia, de su vida histórica a partir de las ideas de la razón."* (Husserl 1991, 328) Desde Platón y Aristóteles hasta el racionalismo de la modernidad y su apoteosis ilustrada del s. XVIII hay una permanente ocupación y preocupación por descubrir las consecuencias de esta racionalidad sustantiva. Pero tal racionalismo, al haber devenido en un naturalismo objetivista[3], se ha revelado como un contrasentido pues ha pervertido el auténtico fin al que estaba llamado. ¿Cuál era este destino? Ni más ni menos que conducir a la humanidad a su plenitud. Objetivo que no sólo no se ha conseguido sino que se ha caminado en dirección opuesta hasta cavar más profundamente el hoyo de la propia indigencia de la humanidad. Cientificismo y anulación de las cuestiones del sentido parecen estar estrechamente vinculados. En la Introducción a *Lógica formal y lógica trascendental*, Husserl describe el interés platónico en construir una ciencia universal nacida de la reacción contra el escepticismo sofista. El hecho de que la ciencia misma estuviera en cuestión hacía imposible que Platón pudiera suponer como *factum* ninguna ciencia: esto es lo que encaminó a Platón hacia la idea pura. De esta manera, la dialéctica ayudó a crear ciencias en sentido estricto. En la modernidad las ciencias se independizan desarrollando métodos muy especializados cuya fecundidad era segura en la práctica.

Métodos desarrollados no con la ingenuidad del hombre de la vida cotidiana pero sí con una ingenuidad de nivel superior, esto es, métodos desarrollados en actitud natural. Esta situación de abandono del interés universal de la ciencia anunciaba ya una tragedia para la cultura científica moderna: no sólo la que se refiere a una especialización tan amplia que impide aprovechar la riqueza de todo el conocimiento, sino la que tiene que ver con la reducción de la ciencia a una especie de técnica teórica. La ciencia moderna, al abandonar el ideal de ciencia auténtica que desde Platón actuaba vivamente sobre las ciencias ha abandonado también *"el radicalismo de la propia responsabilidad científica"*. (Husserl 1962, 7) "Estoy persuadido de que la crisis europea hunde sus raíces en un racionalismo que se ha extraviado. Pero esto no debe ser entendido en el sentido de que, en mi opinión, la racionalidad sea mala o de que el conjunto de la existencia humana sólo debe tener un papel subordinado. La racionalidad (…) es la llamada a dirigir de forma madura el proceso evolutivo". (Husserl 1991, 347)

La situación de partida es, como expresa genialmente Husserl, de una penosa *contradicción existencial* (existenzielle Widerspruch). Esto es, la filosofía está actualmente en una situación agonizante y su recuperación sólo es posible si se vuelve a coincidir en la necesidad de rehabilitar la preocupación por el sentido, por el *telos* de la humanidad. Ahora bien, esa preocupación renovada por la idea de hombre debe hacerse desde la coyuntura crítica actual a la que el filósofo, en cuanto *funcionario de la humanidad,* debe sobreponerse. La coherencia de la línea racionalista, que ahora representa la fenomenología como el *secreto anhelo* del racionalismo (Husserl 1993, 142), reside en que toda la historia de la filosofía se ha orientado a este objetivo que ahora hace patente la propuesta de la filosofía trascendental husserliana: dotar de sentido pleno a la humanidad[4]. Y de esta donación y dotación, de esta recuperación de la teleología en la reflexión filosófica, están excluidas las ciencias empíricas o ciencias de hechos (Tatsachenwissenschaften), *"todas estas cuestiones metafísicas (…) sobrepasan y desbordan el mundo en cuanto universo de los meros hechos (…) El positivismo decapita, por así decirlo, la filosofía"*. (Husserl 1991, 9)

Mientras las ciencias resultaron prometedoras para el hombre, acompañaron a este en su autorrealización. Pero, llegado su momento culminante, se descubre que, las ciencias que han cimentado la civilización europea y determinado su rumbo caótico, al generalizar su modelo de verdad científica como el único criterio de validez, obvian que las cuestiones que realmente le importan al hombre escapan, superan o no pueden circunscribirse a ese pobre patrón de racionalidad. La situación indigente precisamente nace de la proximidad e inevitabilidad del mayor de los peligros: *naufragar en el diluvio escéptico y dejar que se esfume nuestra propia verdad*. De modo que, las ciencias de hechos, las ciencias que han preñado la cultura occidental nada dicen del hombre, ni del sentido de la vida, ni de la libertad, ni de lo que constituye el auténtico meollo de la cuestión humana. *"En nuestra indigencia vital –oímos decir- nada tiene esta ciencia que decirnos. Las cuestiones que excluye por principio son las más candentes para unos seres sometidos a mutaciones decisivas: las cuestiones relativas al sentido o sinsentido de esta entera existencia humana."* (Husserl 1991, 6) ¿Se puede convertir este sinsentido en el clima europeo del siglo XX y de la posteridad? ¿Podrá el hombre abandonarse en este nihilismo existencial resultante del positivismo teórico?[5]

Husserl establece así un nexo tan poco obvio como genialmente profundo entre positivismo y escepticismo. Poco obvio porque si algo pretende el positivismo es conocer, entendiendo por conocimiento científico el acceso al campo de lo objetivamente dado. Y sobre todo porque, la explicación de lo observable permite la predicción de fenómenos. Recuérdese a este respecto el dictum comptiano: conocer para predecir. Acusar de escépticas tales pretensiones parece un despropósito. Pero este despropósito deja de serlo tanto cuando se entiende cómo el positivismo comprende los límites del conocimiento sencillamente como la cerrazón de las ciencias a ir más allá de lo observable, de lo empíricamente verificable, de lo sensible, de lo fáctico. Una cerrazón que viene motivada por la ingenuidad ignorante con la que las ciencias reducen la objetividad al universo de lo dado[6]. La cuestión es que esta merma ontológica (que provoca que también el hombre pierda su identidad esencial para no ser sino otro objeto) convierte en pilares del

conocimiento lo que no son más que endebles materiales sobre los cuales toda construcción estará permanentemente acusando de derribo. Reducir toda objetividad al campo de los hechos (y por tanto de lo que siempre puede ser de otra manera, de ahí el relativismo de lo fáctico) es renunciar definitivamente al hallazgo de sólidos cimientos sobre los que debe pivotar el auténtico renacimiento de Europa. La ciencia moderna se ha convertido en un conjunto de idealizaciones (número, figura, proporciones, en suma entes de la matemática) olvidando que éstas no eran más que construcciones humanas que han olvidado el suelo originario en el que nacieron y en el que recibieron significación. Se trata pues, del olvido del mundo de la vida, *Lebenswelt*.

Implica, pues, abandonarse en manos de la contingencia relativista de la historia en vez de en la apodicticidad de la razón. Supone abandonar el contexto de la teleología, la vida trascendental que dota de sentido y significado la existencia del hombre en el mundo. He aquí el escepticismo de toda una concepción de la ciencia fraguada desde el empirismo radical: el escepticismo que obliga a la ciencia a renunciar a las cuestiones humanamente más urgentes. El escepticismo que reduce el mundo al conjunto de hechos y conmina al silencio todas la preguntas sobre el sentido porque de ellas no se puede hablar, recordando las célebres proposiciones del Wittgenstein del *Tractatus*. El escepticismo que surge ante el posible hallazgo de fundamentos que estén más allá de los hechos y ante la posibilidad de conocerlos. El escepticismo, en definitiva, que renuncia a la posibilidad de una metafísica, por tanto, de una filosofía universal, de una filosofía *perennis*. Este intento de hacer de la filosofía una *ciencia estricta*, le coloca ante dos frentes: el del psicologismo y el del historicismo precisamente dos teorías que tratan de fundar la validez absoluta en algo que no la tiene: en los hechos. En *La filosofía como ciencia estricta*, Husserl denuncia que el psicologismo y el historicismo son teorías reduccionistas que, al mundanizar las ideas, las desvinculan de todo valor y de toda norma. ¿Qué puede hacer la filosofía en esta situación de crisis? *"La fenomenología, vista desde el contexto sociopolítico en el que está inmersa, aparece como el ensayo de proclamar que la resolución de la crisis*

*antropológica pasa por la restauración de un sujeto racional".* (San Martín 2008, 47) La fenomenología, en consonancia con el ideal griego y renacentista, quiere presentarse como la expresión de este saber radical y universal, omniabarcante y global que históricamente ha poseído la filosofía[7] entendida ahora como *allbefassende Wissenschaft*. Sólo una lógica trascendental – advierte Husserl – permitirá comprender que las ciencias positivas están fundadas en una racionalidad relativa, unilateral *"que deja presente su necesario reverso: una plena irracionalidad".* (Husserl 1962, 21)

## 2. Intencionalidad y conciencia. La cuestión del sentido

El cientificismo, lo acabamos de señalar, ha focalizado toda su atención en el análisis de los hechos como si de una correcta delimitación del ámbito fáctico dependiera el éxito del trabajo investigador. Lo que descubre Husserl es que esa misma predisposición a considerar que el objeto material de las ciencias son los hechos arrastra toda una convicción ontológico-epistemológica que se inaugura en la modernidad con la tajante separación entre sujeto y objeto, entre conocimiento y realidad, entre hombre y mundo, entre certeza y verdad. Sólo el idealismo trascendental kantiano apuntó la perspectiva que desarrollaría plenamente la fenomenología: la íntima vinculación entre la objetividad y la subjetividad. La experiencia que requiere la filosofía, explicará Husserl en las lecciones de 1923/24 sobre *Erste Philosophie,* debe poseer la radicalidad que no se observa en las cosas del mundo. Y es que esta experiencia fáctica puede fallar y por tanto nunca puede ofrecer la indubitabilidad buscada. Si los hechos no pueden constituir ningún ámbito de fijeza ni de estabilidad para las ciencias, ¿dónde se encontrarían los nuevos cimientos? ¿De qué estaríamos hablando entonces al referirnos a la objetividad? La primera gran aportación de la fenomenología consiste, pues, en un traslado del foco de interés de los hechos a las esencias. Esencias consideradas como el ámbito de apodicticidad de lo que no puede ser de otra manera y que servirán de roca firme sobre la que construir la Ciencia de las ciencias, lejos de las arenas movedizas de una objetividad meramente fáctica[8]. En

este sentido se ve cómo la preocupación moral por la recuperación del sentido de la vida humana lleva a Husserl a presuponer una teoría metafísica de esencias de las que dependen los hechos a las que se debe acceder intuitivamente[9] para salir de la situación indigente del positivismo científico.

Pues bien, tal nivel de objetividad absoluta, el nivel de las esencias, exige contar con la subjetividad ya que el ser de las esencias consiste es en su *darse* a la conciencia. Y es ahí, en el acceso a la conciencia, en la vuelta a la subjetividad, donde está la clave de la recuperación de esa racionalidad buscada desde antiguo. La actitud radical en la que se va a colocar Husserl es la actitud de un *ego* que quiere fundamentar radicalmente desde sí mismo toda verdad. Es la actitud que comenzó Descartes: la actitud de la duda que se encuentra con la realidad indubitable del *ego*, cimiento sobre el que se edifica todo el saber filosófico. Para Husserl, Descartes obvió que el *ego* es el polo subjetivo de lo que objetivamente es lo pensado o el *cogitatum*. Y es esta correlación *cogito cogitatum* el punto de partida de la reflexión crítica de la fenomenología. Todo lo que hay está esencialmente coordinado con una posible percepción, con una intuición originaria, con una donación de la cosa misma en persona del mejor modo concebible[10]. Ya desde la Introducción a las *Investigaciones Lógicas* se exige la ausencia de supuestos para una filosofía que pretenda ser ciencia en sentido estricto. *"Las verdaderas premisas de los resultados a los que tendemos tienen que residir en proposiciones que responden a la exigencia de que lo por ellas enunciado admita una legitimación fenomenológica adecuada, esto es, su cumplimiento mediante evidencia en el sentido riguroso de la palabra"*. (Husserl 2011, 230)

La revitalización de las cuestiones relativas al sentido y a la responsabilidad, lo avanzamos ya, es el resultado de la consideración *subjetiva trascendental* de la realidad, entendiendo por auténtica realidad ese nivel de *objetividades puras* más fundamentales que los meros hechos. Sentido, aquí, es más que finalidad, objetivo o propósito. El sentido tiene que ver con la donación de significado que la conciencia otorga al mundo. Lo que de momento sabe Husserl es que las ciencias del espíritu parecen haber apuntado ya en esta dirección al

pretender la conquista de la subjetividad. Es el caso de la psicología. Sin embargo, el filósofo observa que este acceso a la subjetividad está todavía fuertemente impregnado del naturalismo positivista que considera la conciencia como un objeto más y que, consecuentemente, ignora el genuino protagonismo de la *fuente constituyente de todo sentido*. Si profundizamos en lo que le ha faltado a la psicología para ser ciencia estaremos, entonces, recogiendo los conceptos núcleo de la fenomenología. Vamos, pues, a ello.

El conocimiento siempre es conocimiento de algo. Este esencial referirse del cognoscente a lo conocido fue visto, desde las posiciones escolásticas, como una función epistemológica denominada intencionalidad. El profundo conocimiento de la tradición aristotélico tomista de Brentano hizo que tal noción fuera rehabilitada para entender el funcionamiento de la conciencia. Desde esta concepción de la intencionalidad, los objetos son para el sujeto porque son vivencias o correlatos de la vida subjetiva. Por tanto, todo lo dado, todas las vivencias, todos los fenómenos tienen un contenido bilateral: la vivencia o *fenómeno psíquico* y la entidad o *fenómeno físico*. Esta es la *maravilla de las maravillas* – en palabras del propio Brentano – y este es el problema filosófico capital: la unidad entre lo psíquico y lo externo, entre la conciencia y lo que hay fuera de ella. El 'estar ahí' del mundo depende del 'estar-aquí' del cognoscente y viceversa. Y esta relación de íntima interdependencia en la que ambas partes están *intrinsice inter se conexis,* y de la que depende la donación de sentido, es la que se empeña en explicar originalmente la fenomenología. El dirigirse al objeto no se trata de un momento añadido a la conciencia, sino que pertenece a la conciencia en cuanto tal. La intencionalidad – escribe Zubiri – es el fundamento de la posibilidad de toda manifestación objetiva para mí, es la manera de ser de la conciencia. La intencionalidad no es sólo intrínseca a la conciencia sino un *a priori* respecto de su objeto, donde *a priori* significa que la conciencia funda desde sí misma la manifestación de su objeto. Y este fenómeno de intencionalidad es lo que Husserl llama vivencia (Zubiri 1963, 236).

Husserl apreció profundamente a su maestro, pero hay algo que no puede aceptarse de Brentano: el naturalismo en el

que deviene su psicología[11]. Una ciencia que busca ser rigurosa no puede dar por descontado aquello que está llamada a investigar, en este caso, el hecho de la existencia del mundo. La psicología declinó en psicologismo (psicología positivista) al presuponer como existente, en cuanto dado, el correlato objetivo de toda vivencia psíquica. Acertó, pues, Brentano en diseñar la dirección redentora de una filosofía preocupada no por la realidad mostrenca sino por la realidad en cuanto vivida, en cuanto dotada de significado por el sujeto. Erró, desde el punto de vista husserliano, en querer hacerlo desde los presupuestos positivistas que segregan sujeto cognoscente y objeto conocido y dan por sentado que este último ineludiblemente existe sin tener en cuenta que, según Husserl, *"a todo lo trascendente (a todo lo que no me es dado inmanentemente) hay que adjudicarle el índice cero; es decir, su existencia, su validez no deben ser puestas como tales"*. (Husserl 2004, 96)

Podemos decir con Kearney (1986, 105) que la fenomenología descansa sobre la convicción fundamental de que el significado no está sólo en la mente (idealismo) o en el objeto (realismo) sino en la relación primordial que se establece entre ellos. Con un apunte a mayores, diría yo, que tiene que ver con que esa relación se da siempre en la conciencia, pues de otra manera caería Husserl en el error que reprocha a Brentano. La relación intencional, en la etapa de la fenomenología trascendental, se explica en los términos de lo noético-noemático, entendiendo por noesis el acto de pensar y por noema el contenido de ese acto que, fenomenológicamente, no es un objeto en el sentido fáctico, ya que la existencia ha sido puesta entre paréntesis por la reducción. Por eso, se puede seguir diciendo que la intencionalidad tiene que ver con la referencia de lo subjetivo al objeto siempre que se entienda por objetividad aquella ontología de lo esencial más necesaria y universal que los meros hechos, objetividad en cuanto fenomenicidad, esto es, objetividad en cuanto constituida por el ámbito de los objetos puros que sólo pueden darse a la subjetividad, a la conciencia. "El problema verdaderamente importante es el de la donación última de sentido por parte del conocimiento y, por lo tanto, a un tiempo, el del objeto en general, el cual sólo es lo que es en su correlación con el

conocimiento posible. Luego se necesita la evidencia de que este problema sólo puede resolverse en la esfera de la evidencia pura, en la esfera del darse absoluto". (Husserl 2004, 90)

Fenómeno no significa estados mentales ni estados psíquicos como afirmaban Locke y Hume. Esos estados no dejan de ser estados reales. Tampoco se refiere a lo aparente en cuanto opuesto a lo nouménico en Kant. Fenómeno es lo que es manifiesto en cuanto es manifiesto. El *cogitatum* es puramente fenómeno. Necesariamente, todo manifestarse, todo fenómeno, todo *cogitatum* lo es de un *ego cogito*. A ese *ego cogito* es al que Husserl denomina conciencia. Fenómeno y conciencia son dos términos correlativos teniendo en cuenta que, esa correlación, es previa y más fundamental que el dualismo sujeto-objeto. Según García Baró, el punto de partida de la filosofía trascendental tiene dos lados interesantes. El primero es que la observación de todo hecho dado es en realidad dos hechos y de distinto nivel: el darse y aquello que era en principio lo único que parecía haber en un hecho. Y en segundo lugar, que cualquier cosa que acontece es, por así decirlo, más que el puro acontecimiento (García Baró 1999, 186).

Pues bien, la conciencia como fuente y donación de todo sentido, como *residuo fenomenológico que queda tras la aniquilación del mundo* (es decir, sería dable pensar un mundo que no existiera ya que la existencia fáctica es contingente) es el gran descubrimiento de la fenomenología. Esta determinación de la subjetividad podemos entenderla casi al modo como Aristóteles entendió la racionalidad, esto es, la diferencia específica que hace del animal un hombre, o como la facultad, ya en la Ilustración, en la que se funda la autonomía y dignidad humanas. Es una manera tradicional y a la vez genuina de volver a descubrir la inmensidad del terreno auténticamente humano que la filosofía jamás debió perder de vista.

A lo largo de las lecciones de 1923/24, según Landgrebe, Husserl habría constatado la imposibilidad de fundar apodícticamente la fenomenología de una vez por todas, de modo que *La crisis* abriría un nuevo camino. Las lecciones de 1923 representarían el fracaso de la subjetividad trascendental y así se entendería mejor –según Landgrebe- la relación de la

filosofía de Heidegger con la de Husserl pues aquel le habría convencido de abandonar el lenguaje de la metafísica[12].

Las ciencias empezaron a tomar conciencia de la importancia de esa dimensión de lo vivido, de lo subjetivo, exactamente en el momento en el que el paradigma positivista estaba dando señales de haberse agotado[13]. Precisamente un agotamiento que se hizo patente porque este tipo de conocimiento científico obviaba el responder al hombre sobre lo que realmente le importa, ahondando más en el sinsentido decadente. *"No sentimos ya la obligación de tratar de imponer a todos los objetos del saber un modelo intelectual uniforme tomado de las ciencias de la naturaleza física".* (Bloch 1978, 19)

La conciencia es la base del razonamiento teórico y el bastión inexpugnable del razonamiento práctico. Por eso, la salida de la crisis exige tanto descubrir el papel de la conciencia en relación con la cual adquiere significado el mundo, como advertir el significado de la propia conciencia determinado por su capacidad para abrirse a ese mundo y hacerlo significativo. De hecho, el acceso a la conciencia muestra cómo todo *Sein* se reduce a *Bewusstsein* (San Martín 1994, 259), esto es, cómo todo ser es sentido de ser y como tal es resultado de la constitución de la subjetividad. El pensamiento trascendental acepta como tales los hechos dados pero reclama un campo propio de investigaciones que rebasa ya por principio el terreno de los hechos mismos y se sitúa –en palabras de García Baró – a su espalada o debajo de ellos o en su núcleo esencial (García-Baró 1989, 185). Se entiende por qué la fenomenología se autocomprende como *ciencia de la esencia de la conciencia*, esto es, ciencia de la capacidad que tiene la fuente de sentido humano de hacer significativo para el hombre todo lo real. ¿Por qué no se ha tematizado todavía este terreno inexpugnable y blindado frente a todo escepticismo, según la propia noción del *ego* cartesiano? Precisamente por la actitud que las ciencias particulares han tomado frente a la realidad. Una actitud ingenua que tiene como tesis fundamental que el mundo está ahí, frente a nosotros, como indudablemente dado. Esta actitud natural teóricamente débil, tradicionalmente tan ilusa como dogmática, ha sido el presupuesto del positivismo y evidentemente el caldo de cultivo de actitudes relativistas y

escépticas. *"Me encuentro* – explicará Husserl – *en una actitud especial, en la natural, entregado completamente a los polos objetuales, completamente ligado a los intereses y tareas dirigidos exclusivamente a ellos".* (Husserl 1991, 209) La esencial vinculación entre esta actitud científica y la atención al polo objetual (*Gegenstandpol*) nos da la clave para conocer cuál es el verdadero motivo de la crisis: la actitud natural que se da en la misma génesis de las ciencias. De ahí que la crisis de la que habla Husserl no se refiera sin más a un mero estado accidental que explicaría este período crítico como un proceso fáctico-temporal sino que la crisis se genera en la misma experiencia originaria que funda la ciencia (Johnson 2001, 51).

Acceder a la conciencia sólo es posible desde una excelsa actitud filosófica denominada actitud fenomenológica. La actitud que exige suspender (*epoche)* los presupuestos empíricos y metafísicos de la actitud ingenua o natural. De esta manera, al abstenerse de *poner el mundo como* existente, se intenta centrar la conciencia ya no en la aparición empírica de los objetos sino en su aparecer para un sujeto, en su *fenomenicidad* a la conciencia. La reducción, pues, opera sobre esa creencia de que el mundo existe así y ahí. No se trata de negar esta creencia sino de suspender su vigencia. El mundo queda *reducido* a no ser sino lo que aparece (*cogitatum)* a mi conciencia (*ego cogito*) en tanto que aparece. De modo que, en el acto mismo de la suspensión de esa tesis[14], en el acto por el que la realidad pasa a ser *sentido,* lo que se presenta como hecho deja de tener su carácter fáctico para pasar a tener el *eidos.* Al quedarme con el ámbito de lo eidético, me quedo con *lo que* es independientemente de su existencia real. De aquí que, toda reducción fenomenológica sea, en este sentido, una reducción trascendental pues el *eidos* sólo se da a la conciencia.

La conciencia tiene al objeto en cuanto manifestado en ella, y esto no significa – como en Kant – que la conciencia construya el objeto. Lo que las cosas son, en su pureza y por tanto independientemente de su componente fáctico, es la esencia, el campo de lo eidético que reclama, para ser investigado, la necesidad de acceder a la conciencia. Vistas así las cosas la fenomenología trascendental no sería sino la consecuencia necesaria de las posibilidades de la fenomenología

eidética. Es la fenomenología trascendental la que descubre como tarea filosófica primordial la investigación sobre el significado que el mundo tiene para la conciencia. Y una vez ahí, *reducere,* regresar a la conciencia en cuanto generadora y portadora del sentido con el que el hombre se sitúa ante sí, con los demás y frente al mundo. Si se suspende la obligación de juzgar sobre la realidad o no de algo para quedarse sólo con lo manifestado a la conciencia, eso que esencialmente se le aparece, el *eidos,* en tanto que se da, es un dato apodíctico, indiscutible. La subjetividad descubierta por la reducción –explica San Martín- no es sino la "indisoluble unidad" de tener experiencia de mundo y el mundo dado en esa experiencia. Por eso la conciencia es el ser que *nulla re indigeat ad existendum.* Cuando se descubre que todo objeto es algo más que su componente fáctico, se entiende cómo ese objeto, además de darnos lo que nos da en un momento, abre un horizonte propio de posibilidades de manifestación, un horizonte de sentido que no se agota en su mero acontecer fáctico. Pues bien, el darse de las cosas mismas es lo captado por la intuición entendida como *principio de todos los principios* (Husserl 1993, 58) donde tiene cabida la evidencia que sustenta la verdad, el ideal buscado de la fenomenología. Una evidencia que equivale a presencia, esto es, al estar de las cosas mismas –del *eidos*- presente ante la conciencia con una necesidad nunca dable por lo fáctico. De modo que la verdad intuitiva (*Anschauungswahrheit*) es más fundante y originaria que la verdad proposicional (*Satzwahrheit*).

Dar cabida a las cuestiones teleológicas, abandonar esos ingenuos prejuicios naturalistas desde los que se han construido las ciencias, con Husserl, es otra manera de liberarse de la minoría de edad que ha obligado a la razón a *andar a tientas,* es otra manera de liberarse de la *fetichización* de los hechos. Lo que viene a insistir, de nuevo, en situar a la fenomenología como culmen del proyecto racionalista que históricamente ha poseído la filosofía. La filosofía consiste precisamente en la experiencia fenomenológica, esto es, en ser ciencia estricta y rigurosa de la esencia. Es evidenciación intuitiva fundada en la apelación objetiva a la intuición en la que encuentra nuestro saber su última y estricta verdad absoluta[15].

## 3. Responsabilidad

El acceso a la subjetividad concluye que el mundo es más que un conjunto de estados de cosas, más que una amalgama de hechos susceptibles de ser captados por la experiencia. El mundo es una complicada red de sentidos. *"Vivimos en un mundo que se ha vuelto incomprensible; preguntamos en vano por su finalidad, por su sentido"*. (Husserl 1962, 9) En la tesis de toda filosofía trascendental va implícito que todo hecho tiene su sentido. Un sentido que exactamente poseen los hechos en su darse a la conciencia. Que el mundo sea antes y prioritariamente algo para el hombre es el fundamento teórico del que emana la exigencia práctica por la que el hombre debe hacerse cargo de la realidad en la que vive. Este hacerse cargo es otra forma de apelar a la responsabilidad que deberá traducirse en un compromiso con la renovación de esa cultura decadente. Husserl llama, de esta manera, a una transformación, a una conversión de la existencia conducida por la actitud fenomenológica (Husserl 1991, 141). De aquí que, la lectura que las ciencias deben hacer de la intencionalidad y del acceso a la subjetividad sea la que posibilite la comprensión de su tarea como responsabilidad científica. En definitiva, para recuperar el sentido de la vida humana, los hombres deben saber qué es ese mundo para actuar libremente en él. Las ciencias particulares, por su parte, necesitarán conocer antes qué significa que el ser del mundo sea para el hombre (tarea de la fenomenología en cuanto ciencia estricta) para luego contribuir desde su ámbito específico a la ingente tarea de dotar de sentido la cultura, esto es, a la tarea de humanizarla. Veremos enseguida qué significa esto.

Una de las cuestiones que afectan a la médula de la fenomenología es que la posibilidad de hablar de una determinación práctica en términos de responsabilidad exige la eliminación del solipsismo con el que tradicionalmente se ha tildado la propuesta de Husserl. De modo que, aunque la fenomenología trascendental en ciernes expuesta en *Ideas* pudiera ofrecer argumentos fundadores de esta crítica, por ejemplo el parágrafo 49: *"la conciencia considerada en su pureza debe tenerse por un orden del ser encerrado en sí mismo, como un orden de ser absoluto en que nada puede entrar y del que*

*nada puede salir"*, hay evidencia textual suficiente para demostrar que el sujeto humano sólo tiene sentido en plural como parte de una intersubjetividad abierta[16]. El punto de partida no es un ego solipsista. El absoluto que acompaña a la subjetividad en Husserl, no sólo es absoluto en el sentido contrapuesto al carácter presuntivo del mundo, sino también en relación a aquella unidad a la que se llega con la reducción y que es previa a la distinción objetivo-subjetivo y también en su capacidad de apertura a una experiencia absoluta. La subjetividad trascendental que es el yo libre abierto a una responsabilidad absoluta como la que originó la filosofía, sólo alcanza una plena relación consigo misma en relación con los otros, es decir, en la *intersubjetividad:* ésta sólo existe y se desarrolla en la mutua interrelación entre sujetos que están referidos a un mismo mundo.

La vieja civilización desembocará en una nueva Europa sólo si se ponen en marcha actitudes totalmente renovadas como la del compromiso y la de la responsabilidad para con los grandes valores que han contribuido a cimentar Occidente. Sin la vista puesta en *el para qué* axiológico, sin la perspectiva del horizonte, el hombre en cuanto individuo y Europa en cuanto sociedad resultan proyectos fracasados. Ese *para qué* que otorga sentido pleno a la existencia necesita poseer una *vitalidad trascendental* imposible de contar como tarea primordial para las ciencias. Las ciencias particulares tienen que partir de esta descripción de crisis sin precedentes para prescribir cómo cambiar ese pernicioso rumbo. Pero lo que importa es descubrir que esta tarea sólo es posible como tarea de segundo grado, es decir, como tarea intelectual subsidiaria de otra más principal y fundamental, la de la fenomenología, consistente en asegurar que esos valores existen y que en la orientación de la vida individual y colectiva hacia los mismos reside la plena significación de la existencia humana. O lo que es lo mismo, las ciencias tienen que estar *incardinadas* en la filosofía en cuanto fenomenología. Desde Grecia, la humanidad ha adoptado una nueva actitud (*Einstellung*) basada en un interés vital universal por la teoría que lleva a formar *comunidades de filósofos y científicos que no trabajan aislados, sino unos con otros y unos para otros* (Husserl 1991, 357). Expresión esta, por cierto, que

traduce la relación de reciprocidad entendida como *vereinzelt sondern miteinander und füreinander*. Pues bien, este interés es el que se ha perdido y debe recuperarse desde una renovada actitud racional, la actitud fenomenológica, ante la que se impone esta tarea infinita.

La idea de verdad con la que trata la ciencia es diferente de la idea de verdad con que trata la vida pre-científica en el sentido de que la primera busca una verdad incondicional que remite a un horizonte infinito en relación con el cual cada confirmación fáctica es sólo relativa y aproximada, lo hemos explicado poco más atrás. Esta idea de verdad tiene siempre en previsión la idea de infinitud que le hace al hombre ser capaz de tareas infinitas. Se trata de dejar de considerar al hombre desde la reducción objetual al que ha sido reducido por las ciencias para comenzar a verlo en su grandeza espiritual: el único ser capaz de dar sentido y tomar una actitud teórica que consiste en reconocer el valor incondicional de la verdad. Es el valor incondicional de la verdad el que invita al hombre a un esfuerzo infinito por encontrar sentido, esfuerzo que sólo puede darse desde la constante perspectiva crítica que confronta cada realización particular con aquel horizonte de infinitas posibilidades que se presentan a la conciencia humana. Se presenta, desde la filosofía, una nueva tarea para la cultura consistente en la crítica de todos los fines, de todas las formaciones culturales y de toda jerarquía de valores que hasta ahora sirven de guía a la humanidad.

De ahí que todo proyecto de renovación necesite abrirse al ámbito del deber ser. Y esto es lo que, de partida, es imposible para el positivismo: poder lanzarse más allá de lo que hay. Sin duda, el gran inconveniente del positivismo es su incapacidad para dar cabida a las convicciones morales que siempre están pendiente de acortar esas dos laderas, la del ser (la de lo que hay) y la del deber ser[17]. Precisamente aquí, en el deber ser reside el sentido, evidentemente el *para qué*. Y la conclusión de la fenomenología, desde esta última etapa, es clara: no es posible ética sin filosofía en cuanto ciencia estricta. Porque, como venimos insistiendo, las cuestiones morales del sentido exigen una clarificación previa de hasta qué punto

sentido y significado sólo lo hay cuando se entiende el significado del *darse* del mundo al hombre, de la esencias a la conciencia.

*"Renovación es el clamor general de nuestro atribulado presente y lo es en todo el ámbito de la cultura europea (…) y las ciencias humanas meramente empíricas que ya existen nada pueden ofrecernos, en efecto, de lo que aspirando a renovación necesitamos"*. (Husserl 1988, 1) Todo, todo en absoluto empieza por ser un sentido –explica García Baró – y por tanto, todo lo hay en relación con la vida. Cualquier sentido es susceptible de comportarse en una serie de formas de conciencia. Lo que importa, según García Baró, es el conjunto de las cosas mismas entendiendo que estas son, en lo esencial, los sentidos que intervienen en nuestras experiencias originarias (García Baró 1989, 93).

Las ciencias humanas no dicen nada al hombre por haberse vertebrado epistémicamente desde el paradigma positivista. Pero desde otro paradigma, en este caso, desde la consideración de su vinculación con la filosofía entendida como fenomenología (con las consecuencias que esto tiene en relación a la subjetividad como ámbito al que acceder) estas ciencias particulares se presentan como necesarias para contribuir a la renovación[18]. No se está pidiendo la anulación de las ciencias por su incapacidad *de iure* para dar respuesta al sentido buscado por el hombre, sino que se está reclamando la necesidad imperiosa de una reestructuración intelectual teleológica de las mismas que necesariamente deben pasar a estar aglutinadas por la filosofía. De hecho continúa**,** *"pero para esta renovación, nos urge dar con la técnica más adecuada, con la técnica de autorrealización de la humanidad auténtica. Y esta sólo puede conseguirse por medio de una ciencia verdaderamente estricta, rigurosa: la Fenomenología (…) Y esta fundamentación supone una vuelta al sujeto, al carácter subjetivo y vivido del sentido de la realidad"*. (Husserl 1988, 8)

Esta renovación de la que habla Husserl es la forma actual de volver al humanismo que desde Grecia ha sido considerada la tarea racional por excelencia. Y así, en filosofía en cuanto fenomenología, la dimensión teórica y la exigencia práctica vuelven a aparecer vinculadas. De modo que no hay

racionalidad que no sea responsable del hombre en cuanto individuo y en cuanto sociedad[19].

No es posible la disección entre conocimiento y praxis. La fenomenología no lo contempla, este es el ideal socrático. *"El conocimiento que genera responsabilidad, la autorresponsabilidad por la realización del propio ser como racional y del ser de los demás hombres"*. (Bonilla 1992, 381) Una renovada actitud comprometida como la que se desprende de la fenomenología sólo puede estar fundada en una nueva actitud filosófica, la actitud fenomenológica por excelencia. Todos los problemas de sentido que necesariamente deben plantearse la lógica y las ciencias, no son problemas de la subjetividad natural, esto es, problemas psicológicos, sino cuestiones que refieren a la subjetividad trascendental tal y como se trata en una fenomenología trascendental (Husserl 1962, 16). El paso de la actitud natural a la actitud fenomenológica es mucho más que un tránsito metodológico pautado, es la condición de posibilidad de una nueva *condición filosófica de la existencia*, de una nueva teoría que abre un nuevo tiempo filosófico y que recupera la gran filosofía al servicio del hombre. Es la actitud que da cabida a la teleología y vuelve a posibilitar la atmósfera humanista que hace tiempo que dejó de respirar Europa.

## Conclusiones

Quizá se pueda insistir más todavía en que el interés y la motivación de Husserl fue profundamente moral de modo que *La crisis* puede ser entendida más que como epígono y consecuencia moral de sus escritos primeros[20], como la explicitación de una convicción ética que puede titularse así: volver a las cosas mismas para volver al hombre y a sus valores, para dotar a la cultura europea de razones teóricas fundadas que nos permitan elegir la paz a la guerra, la cordura a la barbarie, la convivencia al terror. Una vuelta a los fundamentos tanto más urgente cuanto más constatemos que vivimos en una pérdida de *"die geschichtsphilosophische Idee (oder den teleologischen Sinn) des eurpäischen Menschentums"*. (Husserl 1962, 314)

La razón siempre ha estado dotada de *razones* para alimentar la libertad. Cuando el hombre ha sido capaz de

descubrirlas y explicitarlas, explica Husserl, ha ejercitado su *forma filosófica de existencia*. Si echamos la vista atrás comprenderemos cómo este ha sido el proyecto filosófico capital que da sentido a la historia del pensamiento. Lejos de ninguna *astucia de la razón* en términos hegelianos, Husserl quiere recuperar esa dimensión teleológica de la racionalidad[21] cuyo objetivo no ha sido otros que humanizar al hombre, hacerle tan dueño de su libertad como buscador de la verdad. Un proyecto teleológico del que las ciencias no pueden desengancharse pues, no en vano, son productos de la razón. Un proyecto que cuenta con que estas ciencias no son actores de reparto sino protagonistas, eso sí, vinculadas a un guión que marca el horizonte, el *hacia dónde* y el *para qué* de sentido sin el que el hombre y la humanidad no tienen otro destino que la decadencia. El problema es que como todo proyecto es trabajoso y quizá, explica Husserl, nos pueda más el cansancio.

**NOTES**

[1] "Bajo el rótulo de Europa lo que está en juego es la unidad de una vida espiritual, de un hcer y de un crear: con todos los objetivos, intereses, preocupaciones y esfuerzos, con las configuraciones teleológicas, con las instituciones y organizaciones" Husserl, La crisis, 328. Téngase en cuenta que, en Husserl, Europa significa el *telos* de la humanidad. Lo que Europa lleva en sí es lo que todo pueblo, toda cultura, todo ser humano está llamado a hacer: renovar su vida y dirigirla desde la razón. (San Martín, 1994, 140)

[2] Parece que lo que está pendiente en estos momentos críticos, es saber si el carácter filosófico nos introduce en una nueva dimensión diferente de las cuestiones referidas a las ciencias de la naturaleza o del espíritu, o si se desenvuelve en el mismo plano que esta. Lo cual implica que, "la significación precisa de los problemas filosóficos aún no ha alcanzado claridad científica". (Husserl 2007, 7)

[3] "La crisis podría entenderse entonces como el colapso del racionalismo. El colapso de una cultura racional no radica en la esencia del racionalismo en sí sino solamente en su exteriorización, en su absorción como naturalismo y objetivismo". (Husserl 1991, 358)

[4] "Somos, en efecto, lo que somos como funcionarios de la humanidad filosófica moderna, como herederos y coportadores de la voluntad que atraviesa, y lo somos a partir de una fundación primigenia que es al mismo tiempo fundación ulterior y transformación de la primigenia fundación griega. En ella radica el comienzo teleológico, el verdadero nacimiento del espíritu europeo en general". (Husserl 1991,74)

[5] "La fe en el progreso de una sociedad burguesa mimada por un largo tiempo de paz, y cuyo optimismo cultural había animado la era liberal, se derrumbó en las tempestades de una guerra que al final fue por completo diferente de todas las anteriores (…) La situación espiritual del tiempo alrededor de 1918, en el que yo mismo comencé a buscar una dirección, estaba determinada por una falta general de orientación". (Gadamer 2002, 17)

[6] "La experiencia da solamente casos y cosas singulares, nunca universales; pero eso no basta". (Husserl 1993, 51) Antes había aclarado: "No se debe confundir la universalidad limitada de las leyes de la naturaleza con la universalidad esencial." Ibidem, 27.

[7] La función de la filosofía consistirá en recordar al hombre su vinculación con la totalidad del ser, "ihr die Form des bewussten Bindung zu verleihen, einer Bindung, in der Seine spezifische Würde und Seine Freiheit verwurzelt ist". (Landgrebe 1974, 36)

[8] "La ingenuidad, en virtud de la cual la ciencia objetivista toma lo que ella denomina el mundo objetivo por el universo de todo lo existente sin considerar que la objetividad creadora de la ciencia no puede hallar cabida en ninguna ciencia objetiva". (Husserl 1991, 359)

[9] Por eso explicará Husserl que la intuición es el principio de todos los principios ya que sólo en la intuición se nos puede dar algo originariamente siendo esto que se nos da, esto es, la esencia, un fundamento de derecho del conocimiento. (Husserl 1993, 58)

[10] García-Baró 1998, 207. "Lo característico e innovador de la fenomenología, lejanamente anunciado por Berkeley es que no es verdad que las ideas sean los únicos objetos posiblemente directos del conocimiento sino que, justamente a la inversa, las ideas de la tradición filosófica, las ideas de Descartes y de Locke no existen en absoluto".

[11] "El problema de la psicología experimental es que atribuye una naturaleza a los fenómenos, investiga sus componentes reales, sus nexos causales. Y es un puro absurdo: el absurdo de naturalizar algo cuya esencia excluye el ser como naturaleza". (Husserl 2007, 21)

[12] Nos referimos al trabajo de Landgrebe. 1967. Der Weg der Phänomenologie. Das Problem der ursprünglichen Erfahrung, Gütersloh. La traducción española de Presas, Miguel Ángel. 1968. El camino de la fenomenología. El problema de la experiencia originaria, Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana. Un trabajo crítico con la tesis aquí mostrada: la despedida del cartesianismo de Husserl es limitada hasta tal punto que su concepción de la subjetividad trascendental caería bajo la teoría kantiana de la teoría del alma al aplicar al yo el concepto de sustancia, puede verse en San Martín (1997, 101-121).

[13] En el caso de las ciencias sociales, la filología con Saussure, la historia con Berr, la psicología con los teóricos de la Gestalt, la antropología con Mauss y la filosofía con Husserl, estaban, aunque sin un proyecto común, dando muestras de la agonía del paradigma positivista yendo a los sujetos y asumiendo la importancia de lo subjetivo en la labor científica. Véase a este respecto, Pintos Peñaranda (1995, 215-245).

[14] La reducción fenomenológica – aclara García Baró – es tan enérgica que ni siquiera consistirá en negar lo dudoso, puesto que la negación es también un modo de reconocer plenamente la existencia de lo dudoso. Hay que ir más allá:

se trata de un radical "no tomar en consideración" (García Baró 1998, 32). De este modo, escribirá más adelante, "la reducción fenomenológica consiste en un desencantamiento de la fascinación ejercida por la actitud natural". (103)

[15] Cfr. Zubiri (1963, 243). Zubiri explica que, al problema del origen y planteamiento del problema filosófico como término de una ciencia absoluta respondió Husserl con el concepto de reducción. Mientras tanto, al problema de la posibilidad de la filosofía como ciencia estricta, la fenomenología responde con el concepto de intuición. Por último, al problema de la cuestión radical de la filosofía, Husserl se acerca con el concepto de constitución.

[16] Puede consultarse el trabajo de Adrián Escudero (2013, 47-75). Sobre todo pp. 64ss.

[17] El positivismo –explica Adorno- reduce todavía más la distancia del pensamiento a la realidad, una distancia que la propia realidad ya no tolera. Al no pretender ser más que algo provisional, meras abreviaturas de lo fáctico que ellos subsumen, los tímidos pensamientos ven desvanecerse, junto con su autonomía respecto a la realidad, su fuerza para penetrarla. (Adorno 1998, 26)

[18] "La fenomenología se presenta como una manera de existir o forma de vida en la que el hombre cumple su destino espiritual que sirve de fundamento tanto a las ciencias de la naturaleza como a las ciencias morales" (Levinas 2005, 6). "Sólo hay una filosofía, una única ciencia real y verdadera. Las ciencias particulares sólo son sus miembros sin autonomía (unselbstaendige Glieder)." (Husserl 1962, 240)

[19] Nos apremia mucho más la exigencia absolutamente radical de vivir, exigencia que no se detiene en ningún punto de nuestra vida. Todo vivir es tomar posición, todo tomar posición depende de un deber, de un fallo relacionado con la validez y la no-validez de presuntas normas de validez absoluta. (Husserl 2007, 61) Así lo expresa genialmente Zubiri (1974, 31): "Pero si, por un esfuerzo supremo, logra el hombre replegarse sobre sí mismo, siente pasar por su abismático fondo como 'umbrae silentes', las interrogantes últimas de su existencia. Resuenan en la oquedad de su persona las cuestiones acerca del ser, del mundo y de la verdad. Enclavados en esta nueva soledad sonora, nos hallamos situados allende todo cuanto hay, en una especie de situación trans-real: e una situación estrictamente trans-física, metafísica. Su fórmula intelectual es justamente el problema de la filosofía contemporánea".

[20] San Martín ha puesto en circulación la necesidad de leer la crítica al psicologismo de las Investigaciones Lógicas desde el proyecto de hombre europeo que aparece en La crisis, proyecto de hombre que puede resquebrajarse si la racionalidad sustantiva del hombre se reduce a "hechos psicológicos". San Martín (2008, 20ss, 39ss, 53ss)

[21] "La fenomenología pretende recuperar la idea filosófica inmanente a la idea de Europa o lo que es igual la teleología a ella inmanente que se hace n general cognoscible desde el punto de vista de la humanidad universal como la irrupción y el comienzo de la evolución de una nueva época de la humanidad, de la época de la humanidad que a partir de ese momento no quiere ni puede vivir sino en la libre conformación de su existencia, de su vida histórica a partir de las ideas de la razón, en orden a tareas infinitas". (Husserl 1991, 328)

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# Langage et valeurs. Les mécanismes du pouvoir chez Nietzsche

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**Abstract**
**Language and Values: The Mechanisms of Power in Nietzsche**

The present paper investigates Nietzsche's theory of power. The first part analyses the concept of will to power, understood as a synthesis of the multiplicity of forces. The connection between the will to power and interpretation is dealt with at length in the second chapter of this text. Interpretation means domination, organization, the adjustment of something in view of its usefulness to a dominant will to power, but also the creation of values, their infiltration into things, and not least the internalization of the belief that values are universal, because through them, domination becomes effective. The next chapters of the text focus on the main strategies of domination, i.e. the internalization of values and the language. Since values are not only the most important tools of domination, but also the main lies and illusions of man, the language provides shortcuts for giving commands and for understanding them.

**Keywords**: Nietzsche, power, force, will to power, domination, values, language, interpretation, genealogy, morals

## 1. La volonté de puissance comme synthèse du multiple

L'un des concepts fondamentaux de la philosophie de Nietzsche est celui de force. De toutes les notions qu'il met en œuvre dans ses aphorismes, « la force » apparaît depuis les écrits de jeunesse même, comme étant synonyme partiel du terme « puissance ». Dans *La naissance de la tragédie*, des expressions comme, par exemple, « puissances artistiques » ou « puissances de la nature » se réfèrent aux forces artistiques, respectivement aux forces de la nature, telles qu'on les retrouve

dans la composition des phénomènes. Nietzsche emprunte le concept de force non seulement à la philosophie moderne, comme on pourrait le croire, mais aussi aux théories matérialistes de son époque. Une fois qu'il devient conscient de ses vertus, il s'en sert dans toutes les argumentations qu'il propose. Le monde doit-il être compris comme un devenir sans fin, un processus conflictuel des forces qui le composent. Une vertu décisive de cette notion, c'est l'idée de la multiplicité. Les forces sont plurielles, mais leur nombre est fini. Elles agissent et réagissent chaotiquement les unes sur les autres, en formant des configurations relativement stables qu'on appelle des « volontés de puissance ». Celles-ci sont également en conflit permanent, mené sur un champ de bataille, comme dans une guerre réelle. Le théâtre de confrontation des volontés de puissance c'est le devenir même.

Nietzsche ne tombe pas dans le piège de substantialiser le pouvoir. Il n'est pas un but auquel une volonté aspirerait. Le pouvoir est un concept relationnel, désignant le rapport entre les forces ou, plus précisément, le rapport entre les volontés de pouvoir impliquées, à un moment donné, dans une certaine configuration. Le concept de puissance suppose donc la pluralité, qui est liée à son tour à la différence et, par conséquent, à la hiérarchie. Là où il y a une hiérarchie, c'est-à-dire des positions en haut et en bas, il y a aussi domination. Pour Nietzsche, dominer c'est devenir le maître de quelque chose et, en même temps, organiser ce qui est à maîtriser.

Le pluralisme est aussi un trait définitoire des volontés de puissance. Celles-ci ne sont seulement plusieurs, mais toute volonté de puissance est déjà plurielle en elle-même, car elle est constituée d'une multiplicité de forces. Dans chaque volonté de puissance s'exprime son contenu, à savoir la pluralité des forces qui la composent. Chaque volonté de puissance doit exprimer, à la fois, une multiplicité encore plus complexe des volontés de puissance qui lui sont subordonnées et que, dominatrice, elle ordonne. Ce qui engrène l'expression de la pluralité des forces (et des volontés de puissance) contenues, bon gré, mal gré, dans une volonté de puissance, c'est juste le principe d'organisation de cette configuration-là. Or, ce principe c'est la

force elle-même qui, à l'intérieur de ce champ pluriel, s'institue en tant que dominante.

Le principe qui réalise la synthèse du multiple ne vient-il donc de l'extérieur, mais il est justement la force qui *met en ordre*. C'est la force qui, dans un combat permanent contre toutes les autres, arrive à conférer à la structure entière son propre sens, même si sa réussite n'est qu'éphémère. Voilà pourquoi l'expression de la volonté de puissance est une « consommation de la force », de cette force-là dominante lui imposant son sens et sa façon d'être. « Cette 'volonté de puissance' s'exprime dans l'interprétation (*Ausdeutung*), dans la façon de consommer la force » (Nietzsche 1999, t. 12, 10 [138], 535).

## 2. Interprétation et valeur. La puissance en tant que domination

Mais comment la force dominante « se consomme »-t-elle dans une configuration particulière des forces ? Cela arrive, sans doute, seulement dans le cadre du rapport qu'elle entretient avec toutes les autres forces. Il y a deux modalités de « consommation ». Premièrement, elle institue sa différence par rapport aux autres. Deuxièmement, puisqu'elle ordonne la structure entière, la force dominante établit les différences entre les autres forces. Pour le dire autrement, la force dominante « se consomme » par le fait qu'elle trace les limites entre les forces, en réglant les nuances qui pourraient apparaître dans les relations changeantes. Qui plus est, toute volonté de puissance, dans son processus (de croissance ou de décroissance) impose ses propres différences par rapport aux autres volontés de puissance. Sa force dominante intrinsèque, qui lui confère un certain sens, s'exprime donc également par ses rapports avec la force qui, dans le cadre d'une volonté étrangère, imprime à celle-ci son caractère spécifique. La domination s'exerce donc dans une situation de *voisinage*. On appelle ce phénomène de la manifestation de la volonté de puissance *interprétation*, terme que Nietzsche reprend du discours philologique pour lui donner une valeur philosophique. Employé dans un sens très large lorsqu'il faut désigner l'expression de la volonté de puissance, ou quelque sphère de l'existence dont elle fait partie, le concept d'interprétation a un

sens bien plus précis quand il s'agit de la sphère humaine. Au moins dans ce cas, l'interprétation (l'expression de la volonté de puissance) comporte un caractère tout à fait spécial, puisqu'elle a un sens valorisant. Toute volonté de puissance interprète (*interpretiert*), parce qu'elle fixe des degrés et des différences de puissance (Nietzsche 1999, t. 12, 2 [148], 139-140). Dans le processus de sa croissance, une chose (une volonté de puissance) interprète, d'après sa valeur propre, toute autre volonté de puissance.

Par le fait même qu'elle détermine des différences de puissance (c'est-à-dire, par le fait qu'elle « interprète »), la volonté de puissance perçoit, connaît et agit (Müller-Lauter 1974, 43). Les différences entre les forces, dit Nietzsche, ne deviennent saisissables, cognoscibles, perceptibles que si elles sont évaluées par une volonté de puissance. On les interprète ainsi du point de vue de leur valeur. L'interprétation consiste donc à comparer chaque force tant avec sa propre *valeur* ou sa *puissance* de croître, qu'avec les valeurs des autres forces, ou leur puissance de croître. « *La valeur* est le quantum le plus élevé de la puissance que l'homme puisse s'incorporer » (Nietzsche 1999, t. 13, 14 [8], 221). Ou, ailleurs: « Quelle est la mesure objective de la *valeur*? Seulement le quantum de *puissance augmentée et organisée* » (Nietzsche 1999, t. 13, 11 [83], 40). Or, la puissance incorporée par une volonté de puissance n'est autre chose que le rapport différentiel entre les forces composantes. Pour cette raison, l'interprétation qualitative, à savoir l'action qui est propre à la volonté de puissance, représente en fait l'acte de comparer la force ordonnatrice de cette volonté à une autre force, différente.

Selon Nietzsche, le pouvoir n'est pas une mesure en elle-même, mais une relation instituée, en tout lieu et à tout moment, entre les tendances de croissance des forces. Il signifie un rapport précis, celui de domination. Le concept d'interprétation est employé par Nietzsche de manière étrange, très différente par rapport aux usages connus dans l'histoire de l'herméneutique ; néanmoins ses conséquences herméneutiques seront majeures. L'interprétation c'est le moyen par lequel se réalise la domination : « En fait, l'interprétation (*Interpretation*) est même le moyen de s'emparer de quelque chose » (Nietzsche

1999, t. 12, 2 [148], 139-140 ; Müller-Lauter 1974, 39). L'interprétation est donc en même temps l'expression de la volonté de puissance et l'instrument de domination. Au fond, les deux aspects portent sur la même chose. L'expression de la volonté de puissance, qui se manifeste dans tout phénomène, consiste à affirmer la force dominante à l'intérieur de celle-ci, qui donne son propre sens et sa propre direction à la pluralité immanente à cette volonté de puissance et à la proximité de celle-ci. Or, ce fait désigne l'acte même de la domination. En effet, il consiste à instaurer un rapport, une différence entre les forces, qu'on appelle, justement, *puissance.* C'est pour cela que *le principe intime de l'interprétation, c'est le pouvoir* (Figl 1982, 102-3).

Cette idée connaît une intéressante continuation dans la théorie de l'interprétation. Dans l'histoire de l'herméneutique, l'acte de l'interprétation a longtemps été considéré comme étant neutre, ou même bienveillant (cette dernière hypostase ayant été formalisée comme principe de l'équité herméneutique). En mettant le phénomène de l'interprétation en relation étroite avec le pouvoir, Nietzsche a complètement changé cette perspective. Comme il l'a montré dans la *Généalogie de la morale* (III, § 24), toute interprétation est violente : elle est « violation, ajustage, abréviation, omission, remplissage, amplification, falsification » (Nietzsche 1999, t. 5, 400).

## 3. Stratégies de la domination

Pour identifier les stratégies de la domination, on doit rappeler l'idée que le concept central de la philosophie nietzschéenne – la volonté de puissance – ne se réfère pas au fait que la volonté veut quelque chose de donné, préétabli et figé, quelque chose qu'on hypostasie comme « puissance » (Heidegger 1961, t. II, 265). Les deux termes, volonté et puissance, ne peuvent pas être compris qu'ensemble. Car ce qui permet à une volonté de vouloir quelque chose c'est la puissance elle-même (Deleuze 1962, 96-7), à savoir la différence à l'intérieur d'elle, que la volonté veut agrandir encore et encore. La volonté de puissance dispose d'une puissance « interne », qui n'est autre que la différence entre les forces qui agissent à l'intérieur d'elle. C'est dans ce sens précisément qu'il faut dire que la volonté de puissance est une synthèse des forces. Dans

cette perspective, elle s'identifie, *de facto*, avec la force dominante dans ce dispositif de la puissance (dans cet arrangement des forces). La volonté veut sa propre croissance, et cela arrive, bien sûr, grâce à la puissance qu'elle a déjà en elle-même. Cela dans le cas où la volonté est forte, affirmative. Si elle est faible, négative, alors la volonté ne veut que sa propre conservation ou, encore, elle est une simple réaction.

Si l'interprétation désigne précisément l'expression de la volonté de puissance dans son acte le plus intime, celui de domination, elle dépend alors du type de la volonté de puissance. Il y a une typologie de la domination, qui s'ajuste selon la typologie des forces et des volontés de puissance. D'une manière dominent les volontés affirmatives, d'une autre manière les volontés négatives ! Pour le dire autrement, la domination diffère en fonction du degré de puissance qui « s'exprime » dans cette volonté. Et le degré de puissance peut exprimer la tendance de croissance du pouvoir ou, au contraire, de conservation. Par conséquent, l'interprétation dépend de la qualité de la force dominante, de son caractère actif ou réactif. Toute modification de la puissance produit une modification proportionnelle de l'interprétation. Avec chaque instant, on se trouve en fait dans une nouvelle configuration de puissance, autrement dit, dans un nouveau rapport de ces forces-là, donc dans une nouvelle interprétation. Cette dernière naît de tout ce qui la précède. « Toute transformation de la relation réciproque entre les centres mineurs – et cela arrive sans cesse, car il n'existe pas un ordre donné de ceux-ci – change les relations de puissance et, en même temps, les interprétations perspectivistes » (Figl 1982, 110). En d'autres termes, elle est l'interprétation des interprétations plus anciennes. « L'aspect infiniment interprétatif du monde : toute interprétation (*Ausdeutung*): un symptôme de la croissance ou de la décroissance » (Nietzsche 1999, t. 12, 2 [117], 120).

Ainsi que Heidegger l'a bien montré, il y a des stratégies d'apaisement, de gérer une situation de domination par l'organisation de ce qui a déjà été accaparé (Heidegger 1961, t. I, 161 & t. II, 266). Dans ce cas, dominer signifie organiser le « territoire » conquis par simplification et schématisation, par envoi de représentants, donc par la distribution des charges et

des commandes. Pourtant, il existe aussi des stratégies de mouvement, d'accaparation de ce qui se trouve dans la proximité, par une invasion nomade (« la machine de guerre mobile », pour reprendre le mot de Deleuze). La casuistique est ici plus complexe que la simple typologie. La volonté de puissance peut synthétiser ses forces intérieures par l'augmentation de la différence qui existe entre elles, ce qui peut se réaliser par l'expansion sur les forces voisines. Ou, en d'autres cas, il peut se produire, à travers des alliances avec les dispositifs voisins, une division de l'arrangement (du dispositif) initial. La manière optimale de garder sa domination consiste donc à croître sa puissance par conquérir de nouveaux voisinages (Heidegger 1961, t. I, 161 & t. II, 266). On maintient la paix par mouvement, croissance, expansion.

## 4. Les valeurs morales en tant qu'instrument de la domination

Mais comment se réalise l'augmentation de la différence entre les forces ? Le mécanisme identifié par Nietzsche représente la véritable nouveauté de la sphère humaine, l'essence de celle-ci. En bref, c'est pour augmenter la différence qu'on a inventé les valeurs morales. Leurs inventeurs ont engendré la forme la plus subtile de la domination, comme Nietzsche l'a montré dans *Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra* (II, « De la victoire sur soi-même »): « Mais une puissance plus grande [*Gewalt*] grandit dans vos valeurs, une nouvelle victoire sur soi-même qui brise les œufs et les coquilles d'œufs » (Nietzsche 1999, t. 4, 149). La plus grande puissance (*Macht*) sur la terre on la retrouve là où il y a les valeurs – le bien et le mal, c'est-à-dire dans le monde humain (Nietzsche 1999, t. 4, 76). On exerce la force avec les valeurs (Nietzsche 1999, t. 4, 149).

Le mécanisme de la domination est ainsi démasqué. Les forces engrenées dans une lutte aveugle ne se retrouvent jamais à l'état brut, mais amalgamées à des valeurs diverses; elles sont évaluées, étant inclues dans une volonté de puissance qui mène elle-même un combat sur une scène qui change sans cesse. Si les forces – et les volontés de puissance – sont supposées à définir elles-mêmes la nature humaine, les valeurs qui s'ajoutent à elles configurent une seconde nature de l'homme.

Les valeurs se supra-ordonnent au flux naturel à l'intérieur de nous, en le transformant, en le déformant. L'infrastructure des forces intérieures de l'individu est profondément modifiée par la suprastructure des valeurs et des idéaux, de ses croyances et convictions intimes. Tout cela – et la compréhension de la réalité qu'elles déterminent – s'inscrit profondément dans la chair de l'homme. Ils laissent des traces visibles sur sa peau, se mêlent dans son sang, coulent dans ses veines, pénètrent jusque dans la dernière cellule. Chaque organe est un composé de plusieurs forces, mais un composé imprégné de valeurs. Voici quelques exemples. L'estomac est éduqué pour accepter une certaine alimentation. La langue apprécie positivement seulement quelques goûts. Les oreilles ont appris à préférer certains sons, tandis que d'autres leur apparaissent comme disgracieux. Les yeux connaissent d'avance le beau et le laid. Et les organes de reproduction censurent leurs instincts, à cause des valeurs que l'individu assume. Mais non seulement l'ouïe, la vue, le goût et les autres actes sont censurés par la rencontre des valeurs, mais ces changements s'installent aussi au profond de chaque organe à part, en contribuant de manière décisive à sa formation.

## 5. Le pouvoir du langage: intériorisation et vitesse

La domination se produit donc par l'intériorisation des valeurs et des idéaux, qui deviennent des « vérités » de l'homme. Ce dernier arrive facilement à croire qu'elles sont universelles, même nécessaires. Cette illusion est inévitable, car elle est inscrite dans l'être humain. « Les qualités sont notre idiosyncrasie humaine la plus authentique ; exiger que ces interprétations et ces valeurs humaines qui sont les nôtres soient des valeurs générales et peut-être constitutives, cela fait partie des folies héréditaires de l'orgueil humain » (Nietzsche 1999, t. 12, 6 [14], 238). Chez l'homme, le perspectivisme – et donc l'illusion, le masque, le mensonge – sont présents et encore bien plus nécessaires que dans toute autre sphère de l'existence. Grâce à eux, la domination connaît ici les formes les plus subtiles : le mensonge est nécessaire afin de pouvoir vivre.

Mais la domination n'appartient pas exclusivement aux forces actives et aux volontés fortes, affirmatives ; celles

négatives peuvent elles aussi arriver à dominer. Il y a au long de l'histoire de nombreux exemple d'inversion du rapport naturel des forces. Bien que les valeurs soient inventées par les volontés fortes, une certaine interprétation de ces valeurs, donnée par les volontés faibles, négatives, peut s'imposer comme universelle. C'est ainsi qu'il peut arriver que le renversement d'un rapport de puissance se produise. L'ancien esclave devient maître si, en changeant sa croyance à des valeurs données, peut déterminer les détenteurs du pouvoir d'accepter un nouveau sens de ces valeurs. La puissance naît ainsi d'un manque de puissance (Gerhardt 1981/1982, 208).

Au fil du temps, des valeurs triomphent dans leur combat symbolique avec d'autres valeurs, des croyances remplacent d'autres croyances, et des idéaux deviennent des repères absolus, au détriment d'autres idéaux, devenus caduques. Il existe des idées que tout le monde adopte, tandis que d'autres, éphémères comme le temps lui-même, sont destinées à disparaître. L'histoire semble être injuste. Mais il ne faut pas confondre la justice et l'égalité. Les valeurs, les croyances, les idées, les idéaux, les convictions se succèdent sur la scène du monde, apparemment sans aucune règle du jeu. La raison pour laquelle les uns survivent et deviennent même plus forts, tandis que les autres s'affaiblissent et ne restent que de simples paroles, c'est un des secrets les plus grands de l'histoire.

La croyance à certaines valeurs nous rend plus forts, tandis que la croyance à d'autres nous rend faibles et vulnérables. Les systèmes de morale ont toujours voulu être un instrument pour égaliser des forces inégales, pour aplatir la diversité, pour annihiler les différences. Selon Nietzsche, la conception morale de l'homme moderne reflète absolument les valeurs égalitaristes du christianisme. La croyance à ces valeurs est devenue, peu à peu, la norme selon laquelle l'homme européen conduit sa vie. Elles sont devenues obligatoires, mais leur origine est tombée dans l'oubli. Le fait que ces valeurs sont apparues comme fruit du hasard, à un moment donné et dans un lieu précis, a été passé sous silence. En revanche, elles apparaissent comme éternelles, inviolables, sacrées. On ne veut plus rien savoir sur les anciennes luttes à travers lesquelles ont été remplacées les valeurs aristocrates du

monde romain, de ce monde où la hiérarchie et le droit du plus fort étaient unanimement acceptés. Les nouvelles valeurs du christianisme ont donc remplacé les anciennes par un acte de violence, affirme Nietzsche. Quand tout le monde est arrivé à y croire, l'ancien ordre a dû lui aussi disparaître. Car le rapport de forces a été tout simplement renversé une fois que la croyance aux nouvelles valeurs de charité, compassion, égalité s'est généralisée. Ces valeurs mettent à l'index le corps, les sens, les choses physiques, en glorifiant l'esprit, la raison, le monde d'au-delà. Selon Nietzsche, les valeurs de l'homme européen sont un « non » à la vie.

La domination devient donc effective lorsque la discipline pénètre au cœur du dominé, en le transformant en profondeur. Pour ainsi dire, l'esclave est rendu esclave par l'intériorisation des règles et des ordres. Ces derniers subsistent en lui pour longtemps. Il y a une sorte de mémoire des ordres, croit Nietzsche. Et pour donner des ordres qui soient compris et respectés, on a inventé le langage. Pour la bonne compréhension des commandes, on réduit la diversité à des cas identiques, on la simplifie, on la schématise. C'est le rôle qui revient aux catégories. Elles égalisent l'inégal, en fluidisant les ordres et leur compréhension. Alors, le langage est l'instrument du pouvoir. Par le moyen des catégories, on maîtrise le multiple non seulement de manière successive, mais simultanée aussi bien. Grâce à elles, on gagne en vitesse. Les commandes sont communiquées et comprises plus vite, plus souvent. Ainsi la vitesse est un principe synthétique, inscrit dans la volonté de puissance (Franck 1998, 322). Le langage est ainsi l'instrument nécessaire pour le renversement d'un rapport de puissance. C'est de cette manière que le problème du langage est incorporé dans la problématique du pouvoir. Les exercices généalogiques de Nietzsche sont en fait des radiographies des mécanismes de la domination, avec toutes ses stratégies et contingences.

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# Questionner une quasi-absence : le témoignage dans *Temps et récit*

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**Abstract**

**Questioning a Quasi-absence: the Testimony in *Time and Narrative***

The starting point of this article is a surprising finding about Ricœur's *Time and Narrative*. This impressive trilogy – essentially dedicated to the narrative and its capacity to refigure time, often defined as a poetics of history, laying the basis of the theory of narrative identity – barely considers the phenomenon of the testimony, generally understood as someone's narration about a past event. But suspecting a paradoxical lacuna in the problematic of *Time and Narrative* doesn't exempt us from searching its 'reasons'. Thus, in the first part of this paper, we'll take into account, from a genealogical point of view, Ricœur's article on the hermeneutics of the testimony, written few years before his trilogy. In the second part, the questioning of what we've called the quasi-absence of the testimony in *Time and Narrative* will involve keen analysis of the theories concerning the reality of the past determined according to different criteria: proximity / observation *versus* pertinence / possibility.

**Keywords**: Ricœur, Testimony, Reality of the Past, Trace, Representation of the Past

## Introduction

Pour marquer d'un seul geste la différence majeure entre les approches de l'histoire développées par Paul Ricœur dans

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*Temps et récit* (noté par la suite TR) et, presque quinze ans plus tard, dans *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (désormais MHO), on serait tenté de se référer au thème de la mémoire : pour le dire d'un mot, si elle fait défaut dans la trilogie du début des années 1980, la mémoire se trouve par contre au cœur du débat dans le volume des années 2000. C'est une interprétation répandue au sein de l'exégèse et qui a été encouragée par Ricœur lui-même dès les premières pages de MHO où l'on peut lire :

> « [I]l s'agit ici d'un retour sur une lacune dans la problématique de *Temps et récit* et dans *Soi-même comme un autre*, où l'expérience temporelle et l'opération narrative sont mises en prise directe, au prix d'une impasse sur la mémoire et, pire encore, sur l'oubli, ces niveaux médians entre temps et récit » (Ricœur [2000] 2003, I).

Lacune, impasse, omission, voire même oubli – sont tout autant de manières de dire une absence, sans en proposer toutefois une explication. Car avouer l'absence de la mémoire et de l'oubli du registre thématique de TR ne représente pas finalement une justification. Reconnaître qu'un phénomène de la taille de la mémoire fait défaut à une approche de l'histoire ne nous donne pas la raison de cette absence. Comment s'explique alors cette lacune sur la mémoire (et d'autres phénomènes apparentés, comme le souvenir, l'oubli, le témoignage) dans le cadre d'une herméneutique qui se donne comme tâche de « résoudre » ou sinon « faire travailler » l'aporie du temps et, y compris, l'énigme de la passéité du passé[1] ? Est-il d'abord possible de dresser une herméneutique de la conscience historique sans faire référence au passé mémorial ? Peut-on saisir d'une manière adéquate la passéité du passé et son aporie en oblitérant le phénomène de la mémoire et ses corrélats ? S-agit-il finalement d'une lacune, d'un discours muet sur la mémoire, comme le prétend Ricœur ou bien avons-nous affaire en fait à une tentative de restreindre la portée de ce phénomène ?

Une réponse détaillée à toutes ces questions dépasserait largement et le cadre et l'intention de cette analyse, car cette manière élusive de Ricœur de se rapporter, dans les années '80, au phénomène de la mémoire n'est pas singulière : elle doit être lue en parallèle avec d'autres projets précédents de phénoménologie herméneutique, comme ceux de Martin

Heidegger et de Hans-Georg Gadamer, où l'on propose également des interprétations de l'historialité ou de la tradition tout en laissant de côté le phénomène de la mémoire[2].

Nous préférons par contre nous attarder sur un phénomène corrélatif à celui de la mémoire, mais qui partage son destin à travers l'herméneutique de la conscience historique dressée dans TR : le témoignage. En effet, toutes les questions réveillées par l'absence de la mémoire pourraient être mises au compte du témoignage : si l'on parcourt la trilogie de TR qui compte plus de mille pages en poursuivant exclusivement les occurrences de la notion du témoignage, on serait surpris par le peu d'espace que l'on accorde à ce sujet. La surprise s'accroît encore si l'on voit dans le témoignage une forme primaire de mise en récit d'un souvenir : comment expliquer alors le peu de références à ce phénomène dans le cadre d'un ouvrage consacré essentiellement au récit et à sa capacité de refigurer le temps ?

Toute définition du témoignage nous donne peu ou prou ces deux acceptions qui font son noyau sémantique : « acte par lequel un individu atteste de la connaissance directe d'un objet ou d'un événement ; récit par lequel il rapporte cette connaissance »[3] – ce qui rend plus étrange encore le discours minimal que Ricœur accorde dans TR à ce phénomène. Faut-il supposer alors, comme on l'a fait dans le cas de la mémoire, une autre lacune, un autre impasse ou bien s'agit-il plutôt d'une tentative de passer sous silence le rôle joué par le témoignage dans la constitution du temps historique pour parier sur le potentiel historiographique d'un autre phénomène, plus flexible aux conditions d'une poétique de l'histoire, telle la trace ?

## I. « L'herméneutique du témoignage »

On ne saurait pas parler d'une lacune de Ricœur sur la portée du témoignage, si l'on pense à l'article ample qu'il consacre précisément à ce sujet en 1972, donc quelques années avant l'élaboration de sa trilogie TR. Il est vrai que la « dominante » de ce texte, intitulé « L'herméneutique du témoignage »[4], est donnée par une préoccupation de nature théologique d'esquisser une philosophie de l'absolu ; mais au fil de cette élaboration complexe, qui comprend des explorations sémantiques de la notion du témoignage « dans les écrits

prophétiques de la Bible et dans le Nouveau Testament » (Ricœur [1972] 1997, 118), on peut cependant noter des éclaircissements importants à l'égard du témoignage dans son acception historique[5]. L'intention même de l'article est de saisir les mutations de sens que la notion de témoignage subit lorsqu'on passe de son acception ordinaire à celle prophétique et kérygmatique. C'est une opération qui supposerait d'abord de « limiter les conditions de sens sans lesquelles il ne peut être parlé de témoignage » (Ricœur [1972] 1997, 110) – ce qui nous offre un premier cadre de discussion sur le ce que c'est du témoignage et un aperçu sur la manière ricœurienne d'envisager ce phénomène avant TR.

La sémantique primaire du témoignage se précise alors en distinguant, à partir du langage ordinaire, entre un sens quasi-empirique, un autre quasi-juridique et un autre quasi-religieux. D'abord, le témoignage désigne l'action de rapporter ce qu'on a vu ou entendu sous la forme d'un récit, d'une narration de l'événement vécu. Autrement dit, une relation duelle est constitutive à la nature même du témoignage : en acte, il suppose deux acteurs impliqués : celui qui témoigne et celui qui reçoit le témoignage. C'est cette relation duelle qui situe le témoignage à l'entre-deux de l'observation et de la confiance à autrui : « Le témoignage en tant que récit se trouve ainsi dans une position intermédiaire entre une constations faite par un sujet et une créance assumée par un autre sujet sur la foi du témoignage du premier » (Ricœur [1972] 1997, 111).

Si le sens quasi-empirique nous a donné accès au témoignage en tant qu'action, l'acception quasi-juridique vient d'une attention portée aux circonstances dans lesquels on donne ou l'on reçoit un témoignage. En effet, l'attestation qu'exprime le témoignage n'achève sa signification entière que si elle est comprise comme preuve pour ou contre dans le cadre d'un procès : le témoignage peut ainsi incliner la balance en faveur d'une ou de l'autre partie engagées au procès. S'il peut peser sur la manière de trancher un différend, le témoignage le fait grâce à ses deux qualités intrinsèques : il fait partie de la catégorie d'énonciations juridiques ascriptives, autrement dit des jugements qui peuvent être contestés car – et là on touche à

son deuxième trait essentiel – le témoignage n'est pas revêtu de la logique du nécessaire, mais du probable et le critère de vérité que l'on peut lui appliquer n'est pas l'évidence, mais le vraisemblable.

A ce niveau, il est important de noter la digression de Ricœur sur un possible « échange » ou contamination sémantique entre l'acception historique et celle juridique du témoignage. Grâce à ce voisinage sémantique, la sphère du témoignage historique gagne en étendue : on y comprend ainsi non seulement des rapports des événements observés, mais aussi tout document qui peut constituer un argument pour ou contre une certaine hypothèse.

> « Ce transfert du juridique à l'histoire souligne des traits historiques du concept juridique lui-même, à savoir la double notion d'un événement que le témoin rapporte et d'un récit en quoi son témoignage consiste. Il se fait un échange entre les traits juridiques et les traits historiques du témoignage » (Ricœur [1972] 1997, 113).

Le dernier paradigme de sens qui tient à la nature « performative » du témoignage apparaît en mettant l'accent sur le témoin et son acte. Ici, il convient de souligner l'engagement existentiel du témoin (dont l'étymologie grecque renvoie au martyr[6], comme le rappelle Ricœur), dans la vérité de *son* dit, de *son* récit (ce qui ne fait pas nécessairement de lui un argument ou une évidence) :

> « Cet engagement, ce risque assumé par le témoin, rejaillit sur le témoignage lui-même qui, à son tour, signifie autre chose qu'une simple narration des choses vues ; le témoignage est aussi l'engagement d'un cœur pur, et un engagement jusqu'à la mort » (Ricœur [1972] 1997, 117).

En parcourant ces trois variations eidétiques / sémantiques du témoignage qui font – répétons-le de nouveau – « les conditions de sens sans lesquelles il ne peut être parlé de témoignage » – on ne peut pas ne pas constater que l'invariable réside dans la référence au récit d'un événement vécu ou observé. Les sens quasi-juridique, quasi-empirique et quasi-religieux du témoignage ne font qu'ajouter à ce tronc commun soit des notes particulières (le récit comme preuve), soit des clarifications concernant sa nature (la constitution duale ou dialogale du témoignage-récit) ou son effectuation

(l'engagement dans le récit d'une vie). Il est donc hors de doute que, quelques années avant la rédaction de TR, Ricœur voyait dans le témoignage principalement un récit ; même s'il poursuit l'analyse de ce phénomène dans l'horizon de la théologie, la compréhension du témoignage en termes de récit reste cependant un point de référence, une exigence élémentaire de sens. Pourquoi alors le témoignage ne connaît pas, dans cette trilogie, des analyses proprement dites ? Pourquoi le témoignage ne joue pas alors un rôle important dans la refiguration du temps historique par le récit ? Lacune encore, nouvelle omission ?

## II. Le témoignage dans *Temps et récit*

Après avoir parcouru le peu d'occurrences du « témoignage » éparses à travers TR, nous pouvons les grouper en deux catégories : nous constatons d'abord une critique à peine développée des démarches historiques qui traitent le témoignage d'observation au passé, suivie d'une approche qui semble diminuer l'importance distincte de ce phénomène pour une herméneutique de l'histoire. Le témoignage sera ainsi pris, comme nous allons le voir, pour une espèce de document, inscrit ensuite dans la grande masse de vestiges du passé (restes, monuments, archives, résidus) et finalement, placé sous la tutelle de la trace.

### 1/ *Le témoignage comme « observation au passé »*

La raison peut-être la plus claire de cette quasi-absence du témoignage des phénomènes historiques approchés dans TR est exprimée dans le troisième volume de la trilogie, au début du chapitre consacré au « monde du texte et monde du lecteur » où l'on peut lire à notre étonnement :

> « Dire que tel événement rapporté par l'historien a pu être observé par des témoins du passé ne résout rien : l'énigme de la passéité est tout simplement déplacée de l'événement rapporté au témoignage qui le rapporte. L'avoir-été fait problème dans la mesure exacte où il n'est pas observable, qu'il s'agisse de l'avoir-été de l'événement ou de l'avoir-été du témoignage. La passéité d'une observation au passé n'est pas elle-même observable, mais mémorable. » (Ricœur [1985] 1991, 284)

Pour la situer en contexte, il faut noter que cette affirmation vient conclure une première tentative de Ricœur de prendre ses distances envers un modèle naïf d'envisager la réalité du passé. C'est un modèle qui pose comme fondamentale et « totale » (Ricœur [1985] 1991, 284) la dissymétrie entre la réalité du passé et l'irréalité de la fiction ; il n'y a pas d'imbrications de l'imaginaire dans la manière historique de restituer le passé tel qu'il fut, comme il n'y a pas de plages du réel dans la constitution d'un personnage du roman. Dans sa prétention de se rapporter au passé comme à quelque chose de réel, l'historien invoque les témoins du passé : ce sont leurs observations d'un événement qui l'autorise de décrire le passé par un langage d'observation et selon une logique extensionnelle. En effet, sur les pas d'un témoin qui rend en paroles un événement passé vécu, subi et observé, l'historien exige la réalité de ce passé qui n'est plus, tout en le considérant comme référence directe de son discours.

C'est une interprétation naïve de la passéité du passé, voire caricaturale[7] dont Ricœur se sert pour souligner la nécessité de dépasser, quant au problème du passé, le vocabulaire de la référence[8], pour l'envisager par contre en termes d'application et de refiguration. Cette nécessité vient de l'intérieur même de l'herméneutique de l'histoire dressée par Ricœur qui tient le passé pour une reconstruction impliquant à égale mesure l'imagination constructive, la fiction et la fidélité envers ce qui fut, la preuve documentaire.

Mais ce qui nous intéresse ici de souligner, c'est le fait que le témoignage est associé à une manière historienne de traiter de la réalité du passé dont Ricœur veut se séparer nettement. A ses yeux, il ne suffit plus d'invoquer la proximité du témoin à tel ou tel événement passé et ses observations qui en découlent pour saisir et clarifier qu'est ce que la réalité du passé. D'où les affirmations tranchantes citées au-dessus qui disent d'une seule voix que la clé pour déchiffrer l'énigme de la passéité du passé n'est pas à chercher du côté du témoignage. Celui-ci, entendu exclusivement comme rapport d'observation d'un événement passé, n'est pas en mesure d'apporter aucun éclaircissement sur l'avoir-été d'un événement passé, car il se refuse justement à l'observation. La référence de l'historien à

un passé témoigné « ne résout rien », semble dire Ricœur, car l'énigme de la passéité du passé n'est pas liée à la manière d'assurer cette passéité, de lui donner une consistance – tel un noème qui remplit un acte intentionnel – mais à la modalité de rendre compte de l'avoir-été.

Autrement dit, si l'historien, dans sa tentative d'attester le contenu réel de son « objet » de recherche, se limite à invoquer les « voix du passé »[9], il ne fait que découper artificiellement un passé qui ne communique pas avec le présent et le futur. De cette manière, l'énigme de la passéité du passé semble plutôt s'obscurcir que s'ouvrir à la compréhension : même si l'on arrive à « remplir » le passé d'un contenu qui revendique la qualité de réel, ce segment temporel – s'il est sans effets sur le présent et le futur[10] – reste cependant opaque et illisible. Plus simplement dit, à partir d'un présent qui s'étend comme rétention du passé et comme protention du futur, on ne peut lire ou comprendre qu'un passé qui, à son tour, communique avec les autres *ekstases* temporelles.

Par conséquent, il est plus important, suggère Ricœur, d'assurer au passé non pas une réalité figée dans les observations des témoins, mais une dynamique herméneutique, une capacité de répercuter sur le présent et le futur. C'est justement à cet but qu'il prend la passéité du passé pour synonyme de l'avoir-été ; emprunté à la philosophie heideggérienne d'*Être et temps*, où il désignait une des trois structures de la temporalité reliées entre elles par la structure fondamentale du Souci, l'avoir-été [*Gewesenheit*] garde chez Ricœur la même sémantique d'intercorrélation temporelle, car il est en effet le passé imbriqué de manières diverses dans le présent et dans le futur[11]. A la seule différence que le fond de cette imbrication n'est plus donné par le Souci, comme chez Heidegger ; Ricœur préfère par contre mettre l'unité des structures de la temporalité sous le signe de la possibilité et c'est de ce point de vue qu'il tente de récupérer au niveau herméneutique la dimension du passé, minimalisée par la théorie heideggérienne où la primauté est accordée à l'*ekstase* du futur et à l'être vers la mort.

C'est dans ce sens qu'il faudrait entendre la phrase qui conclut la citation mentionnée au-dessus. L'affirmation que « la passéité d'une observation du passé n'est pas elle-même observable, mais mémorable » fait partie d'une révision ricœurienne « drastique » (Ricœur [1985] 1991, 285) du concept de réalité du passé. Les observations apportées par les témoins sur des événements passés ne se constituent pas inévitablement en passé de l'histoire ; si elles n'ont pas de pertinence[12] pour le présent, leur passéité reste muette à l'oreille de l'historien.

Pour tenter une confrontation à l'énigme de la passéité il faut donc prendre, selon Ricœur, un chemin ardu jalonné d'abord par quelques épreuves : dépasser le langage d'observation et de description, sortir de la logique de la référence directe. Ce que Ricœur demande aux historiens c'est en fait d'arrêter de traiter les observations délivrées par les témoins du passé comme le passé réel que l'on peut décrire, observer et prendre pour référence directe de leur discours. A deux fortes raisons : parce que ces observations s'inscrivent néanmoins, comme toute parole sur le passé, dans la logique du récit – qui suppose l'apport de l'imaginaire et de la fiction ; ensuite puisque le simple fait de sommer ces témoignages et de les traiter de référence directe de l'histoire ne jette pas nécessairement une lumière sur l'avoir-été du passé. Celui-ci est par contre à penser à partir de son caractère *mémorable* et non observationnel, à partir donc de sa « pertinence » pour le présent et pour l'avenir.

### 2/ *Le témoignage et la pertinence du passé*

L'avoir-été est le passé qui *reste* dans la dynamique des possibilités parcourant notre temporalité, malgré son caractère d'antériorité et sa nature paradoxale qui réunit ce qui n'est plus avec ce qui a été. Et il le fait grâce à sa *pertinence* qui vient de deux sources : la tradition et la dette de l'historien à l'égard du passé[13]. La pertinence de l'avoir-été devrait donc être envisagée comme le résultat d'un entrecroisement : sous fond du mouvement de la tradition – porteuse de sens et des possibilités enfuies et se déversant aux bords d'un présent interprétant – se précise la double attitude de l'historien d'être à l'écoute de ces

possibilités vives du passé et à la fois de rechercher, dans ses *re*constructions historiques, la conformité aux faits du passé.

On voit ainsi par contraste les limites de la vision « naïve » sur la réalité du passé : une théorie, qui restreint la réalité du passé à ce que peut être certifié par les témoignages du passé et la traite de référence directe de son discours, se fait doublement coupable : elle se sert d'abord d'une définition limitée du témoignage. Entendu exclusivement comme observation ou description d'un fait du passé, le témoignage entretient l'illusion de certains historiens d'avoir, par ce moyen, une saisie *directe* de ce qui un jour fut. D'où la finalité de leur démarche historique – notamment de représenter le passé, de l'illustrer en invoquant un rapport mimétique direct. Mais en procédant de cette manière, ils ne font qu'isoler le passé par rapport au présent d'où l'on mène la recherche, en rendant ainsi impossible la révélation des possibilités inhérentes au passé. Découpé de ses liens avec les autres dimensions du temps, le passé devient dans le cadre de cette théorie le simple « objet » d'une représentation (*Vorstellung*)[14].

Le témoignage dispose donc une relation d'immédiateté au passé qui, mal comprise, pourrait conduire les historiens sur un faux chemin, comme l'a déjà montré Ricœur : en invoquant comme objet de leur discours un passé « observé » par les témoins, ils tombent victimes d'une vision « naïve » sur la réalité du passé, formulée en termes de référence directe, de description et d'illustration. Mais il faut dire aussi qu'en raison de la même immédiateté au passé du témoignage, Ricœur préfère tenir ce phénomène dans le cône d'ombre de son analyse. En effet, par sa proximité au passé vécu, le témoignage ne fait pas figure commune avec les autres connecteurs historiques, telle la trace, dont l'opération historiographique engage en égale mesure « la fictionalisation de l'histoire et l'historicisation de la fiction » (Ricœur [1985] 1991, 442). Autrement dit, le témoignage, surtout celui récent, semble délivrer un passé immédiat, en court-circuitant les médiations narratives – ce qui contredit d'une certaine façon la « fonction poétique » de l'histoire dont Ricœur se fait le théoricien. Cette réserve par rapport au témoignage ressort clairement de ce passage :

> « La critique du témoignage des survivants est la plus difficile à exercer, en raison même de la confusion inextricable entre le quasi-présent, ressouvenu tel qu'il fut vécu au moment de l'événement, et la reconstruction fondée seulement sur des documents, sans compter les distorsions inhérentes à la sélection intéressée – et même désintéressée – opérée par la mémoire. » (Ricœur [1985] 1991, 168)

Le témoignage fait ainsi figure de rebelle dans la suite de connecteurs historiques retenus par Ricœur et il ne peut pas par conséquent jouer le rôle d'instance exemplaire, que l'on va voir par contre céder au phénomène de la trace. Le témoignage fait d'abord problème par sa phénoménalité plurielle, difficile à encadrer, qui comprend des témoignages oraux, oculaires, écrits, enregistrés, ensuite par la pluralité de ses référents entrecroisés (passé vécu, passé déclaré et attesté, quasi-présent, passé reconstruit), par la pluralité de mises en archive qu'il comporte et finalement par sa nature mémorielle qui réveille des suspicions quant à la fidélité du passé « rendu ». Si l'on le place dans la catégorie de documents, on laisserait de côté les témoignages des survivants qui font partie de la mémoire collective récente et qui sont à la base de la dynamique de la suite des générations ; inclus par contre dans la classe des traces, on risquerait de rater justement la proximité au passé vécu dont atteste le témoignage. Sommes-nous alors dans la situation de répéter l'approche de Marc Bloch, qui consiste en mettre les termes de témoignage, reste, vestige, trace dans un rapport de synonymie généralisée[15] ?

3/ *La trace comme pré-supposition épistémologique du témoignage*

Il est hors de doute que le phénomène de la trace connaît dans TR une attention directement proportionnelle à l'importance que Ricœur lui reconnaît parmi les connecteurs historiques : en effet, il n'hésite pas à le prendre pour le « réquisit de toutes les productions de la pratique historienne ». C'est par sa phénoménalité particulière, par sa fonction mimétique du passé et par ses croisements prolifiques avec la fiction que la trace mérite ce titre :

> « Que la trace soit un tel réquisit pour la pratique historienne, il suffit, pour le montrer, de suivre le processus de pensée qui, partant

> de la notion d'archives, rencontre celle de document (et, parmi les documents, celle de témoignage) et, de là, remonte à sa présupposition épistémologique dernière : la trace précisément. » (Ricœur [1985] 1991, 212)

C'est une citation importante pour notre discussion, car elle vient confirmer, d'un côté, le rangement du témoignage dans la catégorie plus large de documents et, de l'autre, elle fait de la trace la condition nécessaire à toute fonction historiographique des connecteurs qui constituent le temps de l'histoire. Autrement dit, si le document, l'archive ou le témoignage ont quelque fonction poétique, c'est grâce à leur parenté avec la trace. On ne serait pas loin de la vérité si l'on parlait ici d'une circularité sémantique : sous la catégorie de la trace, Ricœur recueille les éléments de la pratique historique avec leur signification particulière, puisque ceux-ci s'expliquent le mieux à partir de la logique de la trace. Pour illustrer et clarifier en quoi consiste ce statut de présupposition épistémologique de la trace, il suffit de s'arrêter sur un seul aspect : la signifiance attachée à la trace.

Le terme de signifiance est emprunté à la philosophie de Levinas, où il désigne cette particularité de la trace de signifier sans faire apparaître. Par rapport à d'autres signes, la trace s'en distingue par deux points : elle ne renvoie pas à une présence, mais elle indique toujours un passage ; ce faisant, elle dérange un ordre plutôt que s'organiser en système comme tend tout signe[16]. De ces traits de la trace – précisés par Levinas dans le cadre de sa théorie du visage – Ricœur ne retient au niveau herméneutique que cette persistance de la trace en signifier indifféremment et au-delà du contexte initial de sa parution.

C'est en invoquant cette capacité de la trace qu'il peut expliquer comment les vestiges, malgré la sémantique restreinte de leur emploi initial, malgré la disparition de leur monde ou du contexte historial-mondain auquel elles appartenaient premièrement, continuent à donner à comprendre à travers les époques. Des vestiges que Ricœur appelle, d'après Marc Bloch, et en confirmant à la fois l'échange sémantique entre le témoignage et la trace, des « témoins malgré eux »[17]. Mais cet aspect « sémantique » de la trace est

profondément lié au caractère « chosique » (Ricœur [1985] 1991, 219) de ce phénomène, notamment au fait que la trace a été effectivement laissée, que sa marque est visible ici et maintenant. En effet, c'est sur ce côté « chosique » que s'achève la dynamique paradoxale de la trace : le passé du passage qui n'est plus demeure justement préservé dans un signe, un vestige, une chose ; et c'est à partir de cette marque physique qu'on peut remonter à la chose marquante et tenter de la *re*construire dans sa passéité. C'est justement cette dynamique qui fait de la trace, aux yeux de Ricœur, le « réquisit de toutes les productions de la pratique historienne » et c'est précisément cette dynamique que la trace transmet aux autres connecteurs, ainsi qu'au témoignage, en tant que leur « pré-supposition épistémologique » :

> « Si les archives peuvent être dites instituées, et les documents collectés et conservés, c'est sous la pré-supposition que le passé a laissé une trace, érigée par monuments et documents en témoins du passé. » (Ricœur [1985] 1991, 217)

## Conclusions

Parler d'une *quasi-absence du témoignage* dans l'herméneutique de la conscience historique développée par Ricœur dans TR semble être, à la fin de notre étude, un choix interprétatif légitime. Comme se livrant à un exercice de logique qui rappelle le *Parménide* de Platon, du témoignage nous pouvons dire à la fois qu'il est et qu'il n'est pas présent à travers cette réflexion poétique sur l'histoire. Quant à sa présence dissimulée, diffuse, elle se joue d'abord au niveau d'une synonymie avec les documents, les vestiges, les résidus. Mais rangé dans cette classe de connecteurs dont le fonctionnement historiographique se fait exclusivement selon la logique poétique de la trace, le témoignage perd graduellement sa particularité. Ce qui nous permet de parler de son absence significative à plusieurs figures : elle se donne d'emblée comme une *absence paradoxale*, car comment comprendre autrement pourquoi Ricœur ne récupère pas, au niveau de son herméneutique du récit historique, un phénomène qui se définit essentiellement comme mise en récit d'un événement passé ?

En réponse possible, nous pourrions soupçonner une *absence imposée* du témoignage : par sa proximité au passé et par sa prétention de rendre d'une manière fidèle ce qui fut, le témoignage n'était pas du tout la meilleure illustration des thèses de la poétique de l'histoire recherchée par Ricœur. Mais garder le témoignage sous une quasi-silence a encore une dernière raison que nous ne pouvons ici que présumer : c'était une manière de contourner un problème épineux pour Ricœur, notamment la situation « impossible » où il aurait dû expliquer en termes de « mimesis poétique », « fictionalisation de l'histoire », « quasi-passé » et « être-comme de l'événement passé » les témoignages des survivants et des rescapés de la Shoah. Ce problème-ci s'avérera d'une importance capitale pour la réflexion sur l'histoire que Ricœur va développer après *Temps et récit* et dont le sommet sera indéniablement *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*.

**NOTES**

[1] Dans TR3, cette aporie est formulée en termes de conflit entre la perspective phénoménologique et la perspective cosmologique sur le temps, autrement dit entre le temps de l'âme et le temps du monde (Ricœur [1985] 1991, 15 et 24-25). Il est ici important de souligner qu'aussi bien TR que MHO développent des théories herméneutiques de l'histoire constituées en réponse à des énigmes ou des apories. Si dans TR, c'est à l'aporie du temps que la poétique de l'histoire se veut être « une réplique », même une « solution » (voir Ricœur [1985] 1991, 189 et 437), dans MHO, c'est par contre autour de l'énigme de la présence d'une chose absente marquée par l'antériorité que s'articulent les trois parties de l'ouvrage (la phénoménologie de la mémoire, l'épistémologie de l'histoire et l'herméneutique de la condition historique) (Ricœur [2000] 2003, II). Dans la manière de se rapporter à ces apories et énigmes, qui diffère d'un ouvrage à l'autre, il faudrait découvrir « les intentionnalités régulatrices » des réflexions de Ricœur sur l'histoire : de ce point de vue, TR se distingue comme un travail de *penser* la passéité du passé, tandis que MHO tente par contre d'*attester* la passéité du passé.

[2] Cette absence de la mémoire du cadre thématique de la phénoménologie herméneutique faudrait-il la mettre au compte de sa « mauvaise réputation » (Ricœur [2000] 2003, 5-6) depuis le début de la philosophie moderne, lorsque Descartes et Spinoza l'associaient à la mémorisation, à l'imagination et à l'erreur ? Ou faudrait-il la voir comme une manière de prendre de la distance par rapport aux théories de Bergson qui accordaient, à l'époque, une large place à la mémoire ? A noter cependant quelques exceptions : le cours de Martin Heidegger de 1921, où il s'attaque à la question de la *memoria* chez Augustin (*Augustinus und der Neuplatonismus* (SS/1921), in *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1995) et ses écrits tardifs sur l'*Andenken*.

[3] Auroux (dir.) 1990, 2565.

[4] Ricœur 1994, 107-140. Comme la plupart des articles de Ricœur, celui-ci est également issu d'une conférence où l'auteur s'ouvre d'abord aux questions et aux suggestions venues de la part de son auditoire. Prononcée à Rome, dans le cadre d'un colloque sur le témoignage organisé par Enrico Castelli, la communication de Ricœur a pu tirer parti des commentaires d'un publique avisé où l'on comptait E. Levinas, G. Vattimo et H.-G. Gadamer. Voir Castelli 1972 et pour un commentaire voir Roussin 2006, 353 et suiv.

[5] Jean Greisch identifie même un rapport de conditionnement entre la phénoménologie herméneutique du témoignage esquissée par Ricœur et l'exégèse des témoignages historiques : « L'exégèse des témoignages historiques doit pouvoir venir à la rencontre de l'exégèse de soi-même, ce qui ne peut se faire que si le témoignage donne quelque chose à interpréter : l'immédiateté de l'absolu qui nous interpelle. » Greisch 2001, 377.

[6] A rappeler ici également l'étymologie du terme « témoin » proposée par E. Benveniste dans *Le Vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* et reprise par Ricœur même dans MHO, p. 205 : « Dans le droit romain, le mot *testis*, dérivé de *tertius*, désigne les tierces personnes chargées d'assister à un contrat oral et habilitées à certifier cet échange ». Selon Giorgio Agamben, pour désigner le témoin, en latin il y a encore le mot *superstes* qui renvoie à celui qui a vécu quelque chose, a traversé de bout en bout un événement et peut ainsi en témoigner. Voir Agamben 1999, 17.

[7] La question est de savoir à qui peut-on assigner cette théorie « naïve » du passé, faute de références précises de la part de Ricœur. S'agit-il de la théorie de L. von Ranke qui cherchait à rendre les faits du passé *tels qu*'ils ont eu lieu en réalité [« *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* »], par le moyen de la description et en s'effaçant, comme sujet, pour « laisser parler les choses » ? Même si Ricœur reconnaît que cette théorie est mue par l'idéal de l'objectivité, il considère cependant que « ce fameux principe rankéen n'exprime pas tant l'ambition d'atteindre le passé *lui-même*, sans médiation interprétante, que le vœux de l'historien de se dépouiller de ses préférences personnelles [...] » (TR3, p. 272, n. 1). Voir aussi Dewalque 2010, 155-175 et Michel 2013, surtout 280-282. Il serait également intéressant de voir comment ce principe de von Ranke sera récupéré plus tard par Ricœur dans MHO, p. 363 et suiv.

[8] Dans une étude rétrospective portée sur TR, Ricœur signale encore un motif pour abandonner le terme de référence lorsqu'il traite du passé : « Celui-ci [le terme de référence] m'apparait aujourd'hui trop dépendant de l'analyse propositionnelle menée dans le cadre d'une sémantique logique où priorité est donnée au discours descriptif sur ce que j'appelais encore dans la *Métaphore vive* redescription.» Ricœur 1990, 29.

[9] A cette notion, Ricœur oppose, à l'appui de sa théorie de l'entrecroisement entre l'histoire et la fiction, le concept de « quasi-passé de la voix narrative qui se distingue alors entièrement du passé de la conscience historique » par sa capacité de nommer « [c]ette affinité profonde entre le vraisemblable de pure fiction et les potentialités non effectuées du passé historique ». Ricœur [1985] 1991, 346-347.

[10] Il ne serait pas dénué de sens de renvoyer ici à la traduction que Ricœur proposait, dès les années '70, pour la notion capitale de la pensée de H.-G. Gadamer « *Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein* », qu'il rend en français comme la « conscience exposée aux effets de l'histoire » ou la « conscience de l'efficace historique ». Ricœur 1986, 342-343.

[11] M. Heidegger, *Être et temps*, § 65, dans la traduction de Ricœur de TR : « Le phénomène qui offre pareille unité d'un à-venir qui rend présent dans le procès d'avoir-été, nous le nommons la temporalité ». A comparer avec la traduction de E. Martineau : « Or ce phénomène unitaire en tant qu'avenir étant-été-présentifiant, nous l'appelons la *temporalité* », Authentica, Hors commerce, 1986, p. 251.

[12] Voir l'interprétation de Pol Vandevelde à ce passage d'où nous retenons l'étymologie du mot « pertinence » qui renvoie à l'appartenance au présent : « Cela signifie que l'action ou le passé entretiennent une double relation avec le compte rendu qui peut en être fait. D'une part, ils sont révolus et donc passés au sens d'abolis, mais d'autre part, si un compte rendu en est possible, ils doivent encore cependant entretenir une relation de pertinence avec le présent. S'ils sont révolus, ils ne sont pas complètement engouffrés dans le passé, mais demeurent significatifs et ainsi pertinents au sens du latin *pertinere* : ils appartiennent encore au présent. » Vandevelde 2013, 206. A comparer avec l'interprétation du même passage proposée par François Dosse qui considère que Ricœur pose ici frontalement la question de ce qui fait mémoire, sans parler cependant de la mémoire, ajouterions-nous. Dosse 2001, 137-152.

[13] La notion de dette à l'égard du passé connaît dans TR une double articulation : elle s'entend d'abord comme dette à l'égard des morts, où l'accent est mis sur la perte, la distance et le deuil (c'est une acception empruntée à Michel de Certeau et son *Ecriture de l'histoire*). Mais il y a également une dette, considère Ricœur, à l'égard de l'héritage de potentialités vives qui habitent encore le passé. A ce niveau, on pourrait se demander à juste titre si le sentiment de la dette envers le passé est à chercher d'abord chez les historiens ou plutôt chez les témoins. Les témoins ne sont-ils pas les premiers à se sentir endettés à l'égard du passé, ne sont-ils pas les porteurs de la vérité d'un passé qui se demande à être dit ? Quant au caractère problématique de la notion de « dette » de l'historien chez Ricœur, voir Barash 2010, 131-138.

[14] A la représentation du passé comme simple image (*Vorstellung*), Ricœur oppose la représentance du passé comme lieutenance (*Vertretung*), qui a comme référence indirecte un passé absent, mais signifiant (Ricœur [1985] 1991, 253-254). Selon le commentaire de J. Michel, « parler de *représentance* (ou de *lieutenance*) signifie que l'être de l'avoir-été ne peut être à proprement parlé re-dupliqué, présenté et présentifié à l'identique, dans les récits historiques ». Michel 2013, 279.

[15] Bloch 1997, 71 : « [Q]u'entendons-nous en effet par documents, sinon une "trace", c'est-à-dire la marque, perceptible aux sens, qu'a laissée un phénomène en lui-même impossible à saisir ? ». Voir aussi le commentaire bref, mais critique de Ricœur : « Tout est dit, mais tout est énigme ». Ricœur [1985] 1991, 175.

[16] Levinas 1972, 64 : « [La] trace a encore ceci d'exceptionnel par rapport aux autres signes : elle signifie en dehors de toute intention de faire signe et en dehors de tout projet dont elle serait la visée » ; « La trace authentique, par contre, dérange l'ordre du monde. Elle vient 'en surimpression' ».

[17] « [C]'est dans les témoins malgré eux que la recherche historique, au cours de ses progrès, a été amenée à mettre de plus en plus sa confiance. […] Nous nous attachons ordinairement avec bien plus d'ardeur à ce qu'il nous laisse entendre, sans avoir souhaité le dire.» Bloch 1997, 75 et 76.

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# The *Coincidentia oppositorum* and the Feeling of Being

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**Abstract**

The *coincidentia oppositorum* formula abbreviates a profound tendency of human thought, which is present in all times and cultures. In other words, the thinking has always felt that its supreme and sublime task is to "make peace" between Perfect and Imperfect, Transcendence and Immanence, Spirit and Matter, Good and Evil. Also, almost all ontological projects axiomatically stipulate the primordiality and the superior metaphysical competence of a *feeling of being*, a pre(non)-thinking disposition of the human being. In this sense, the case of Martin Heidegger can be brought forth, who argues that *affective disposition (Befindlichkeit*), that is not "affects" or "feelings" or "state of soul," pre-determines the entire perception, understanding and outlook on the world and ourselves, and it is one that provides, in the first instance, matching the *Dasein* with his being. This article examines how the *coincidentia oppositorum* and the *feeling of being* are assumed and operationalized in the ontological project designed by Mihai Șora, who is considered to be "the Philosopher par excellence" in Romanian culture.

**Keywords**: *coincidentia oppositorum,* feeling of being, Șora, metaphysics, purpose of being

## 1. Introduction

Analyzing the *coincidentia oppositorum* formula, Mircea Eliade comes to the conclusion that the expression coined by Nicholas Cusanus (1401–1464)[1] encompasses a profound

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tendency of human thought, which is present in all times and cultures: "the fusion of all things, the suppression of all limits, the suspension of any «forms», any distance and discrimination" (Eliade 1940, 25)[2]. Indeed, although the "concrete universal" (another expression of *coincidentia oppositorum*) has had a full acceptance only in the philosophical modernity (to a large extent due to Hegel's work), yet the "concrete universal" is not, in essence, a modern invention. Whereas thinking has always felt that its supreme and sublime task is to "make peace" between Perfect and Imperfect; Transcendence and Immanence; Spirit and Matter; Good and Evil. And the metaphysical excellence of thinking, if we do search for such excellence, does not consist only in the fact of identifying and announcing supreme and sublime task, but it consists precisely in the fact of thinking that supreme and sublime task of thinking.

Although metaphysics is defined as *the science of being*, and thus it is an exclusive task of thinking, however, almost all ontological projects axiomatically stipulate the primordiality and the superior metaphysical competence of a *feeling of being* (an affective and pre(non)-thinking disposition of human being). In this sense, the most eloquent case is Martin Heidegger, who has extensively endeavored to ensure metaphysics an undoubted distinction. The German philosopher argues – in *Being and Time* – that *Dasein* ("being-there" or "being-here")[3] has two basic modes (*Existenzial*) of being-in-the-world: *the affective disposition (Befindlichkeit* or *Stimmung*) and *the understanding (Verstehen).* But this affective disposition (that is not "affects" or "feelings" or "states of the soul")[4] pre-determines the entire perception, understanding and outlook on the world and ourselves, and is the one that matches, in the first instance, the *Dasein* with his being.

> "As engagement in the disclosure of being as a whole as such, freedom has already attuned all comportment to being as a whole. However, being attuned (attunement) can never be understood as «experience» and «feeling,» because it is thereby simply deprived of its essence. For here it is interpreted on the basis of something («life» and «soul») that can maintain the semblance of the title of essence only as long as it bears in itself the distortion and misinterpretation of being attuned. Being attuned, i.e., ek-sistent exposedness to beings as a whole, can be «experienced» and «felt» only because the «man

> who experiences» without being aware of the essence of the attunement, is always engaged in being attuned in a way that discloses beings as a whole." (Heidegger 1993, 126)

In this study we will focus on how the *coincidentia oppositorum* and the *feeling of being* are appropriated and operationalized in the ontological project conceived by Mihai Şora[5], who is considered to be "the Philosopher par excellence" in Romanian culture, despite the fact that he did not (and does not) enjoy a reputation as wide as other prestigious figures in Romanian culture and philosophy (like Constantin Noica, Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, Eugene Ionesco or Lucian Blaga). For example, Aurel Codoban notes – with lucid admiration and in agreement with many others exegetes – that Mihai Şora "was, and remains, undeniably and in the most authentic sense, the Philosopher par excellence. […] Şora appears to us today as the most austere philosopher in philosophical pursuits, who was not appropriated by a philosophy of culture, values or religion […]. Şora's thinking is one of those post-Husserlian philosophies that is indeed very rare in Romanian philosophy, therefore a really modern one in the sense of Western chronology." (Codoban 1997, 92)

## 2. The spiritual background of Şora's philosophical path

To connect ourselves as appropriately as possible to Mihai Şora's philosophy, we rely on the same guidelines that helped him, in one way or another, to take it out of obscurity, to view and assume that metaphysical location where it already is. According to the testimony of the Romanian philosopher, the first edifying contact was with Nicholas Cusanus. Although this medieval philosopher created a term (*coincidentia oppositorum*) which had a spectacular career – both in the public space and in the cultivated and sophisticated circles –, yet he is almost ignored by books of history of philosophy and is invoked only succinctly by the specialized exegesis[6]. But Mihai Şora was not discouraged by this "marginalization" and "vulgarization" committed by the posterity of Cusanus. So he got acquainted with the medieval cardinal in a sufficiently immediate and

uninhibited way so that this introduction was for him an early opportunity of (re)finding himself.

> „Undoubtedly, Cusanus is an axis for my thinking, I am fully aware of this; I want to say that there is inside me, latently, a «polar» thinking, grafted on a keen feeling of infinity, only that there, in Cusanus, I finally found a model that suited me, the model of *coincidentia oppositorum* which goes beyond the limit of opposites, a model which then became operative in my own thinking." (Tănase 2006, 256)

We must point out that this revealing intimacy with Nicholas Cusanus was somewhat prepared and announced by the encounter with Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas (in the context of those university seminars conducted by Mircea Eliade). So this encounter with Cusanus was the initial occasion that made Mihai Şora unambiguously to identify the metaphysical stake (and challenge). But he acutely felt the need to find the best possible ways (methods) to face this challenge. And so the most suitable way that he found was phenomenology. First, the one promoted by Edmund Husserl, who cultivated an irrepressible appetite for a radical sincerity towards the world and consciousness. But however, Husserl did not help him satisfy this appetite. So Şora searched further and this is how he somehow inevitably discovered Martin Heidegger.

Therefore, drawing on Husserl and Heidegger, Mihai Şora fully understood that the phenomenology is the only way one can *access* truth, freedom and being. But equally, and only through Heidegger did it become clear to him that phenomenology cannot clarify the being, scientifically and transparently (as Husserl wanted), but that phenomenology only puts us firmly and irrevocably in front to the mystery of being.

After these encounters, which have endowed him with a vigorous philosophical framework, Mihai Şora had another edifying encounter: namely with Blaise Pascal – who managed to give that *coincidentia oppositorum* a broad, dense and delightful amplitude.

> „Pascal is explained by Pascal, because he is all-encompassing; paradoxically, he has his own logic: «*tout est un, tout est divers*», which transcends formal logic. For example, he urges you to appropriate two contradictory sentences at the same time, i.e. each

> *yes* to be a *not*, and every *not* to be a*yes*. For me, reading Pascal was like a revelation." (Şora 2005, 30)

Trying to synthesize these edifying encounters of Mihai Şora, we can say the following: while Nicholas Cusanus initially helped him to see his road (to strongly focus his gaze on the horizon ahead, which looks back at him), and Husserl and Heidegger encouraged him to start walking down this road, choosing his steps very carefully, Pascal helped him to convince himself that this was the right road to take.

These would be the most appropriate philosophical havens where we vigorously and effectively anchor, so as not to become shipwrecked in the confusing, erudite and overwhelming storm of Mihai Şora's philosophical texts[7]. The philosophical locations that are under the sign of *coincidentia oppositorum* (especially the coincidence between Unity and Multiplicity), under the sign of austerity and heroism of phenomenology, and especially under the sign of that frail, decaying and mortal reed, but sufficiently thinking, lucid and poetic in order to fully realize the greatness of perfection and immortality.

## 3. The anthropological-metaphysical parameters of Şora's philosophy

As Mihai Şora said, his first book (*Du dialogue intérieur. Fragment d´une Anthropologie métaphysique / About the Inner Dialogue. Fragment of a Metaphysical Anthropology*) is actually an essay, but it is based on a consistent and serious metaphysical legitimation contained in a volume entitled *Unité et Pluralité. Notes pour une métaphysique de l' « ens creatum » / Unity and Plurality. Notes for a metaphysics of the "ens creatum"* (but the manuscript of this volume was lost and therefore never published). However, despite its prosaic extravagances and wiles, we consider that, through its subtext, *The Inner Dialogue* provides an appropriate image of the metaphysical construct of that extensive and rigorous lost volume. Moreover, according to the frequent statements made by the Romanian philosopher, but also according to commentators who have studied *Thinner Dialogue,* the metaphysical anthropology prefigured in his French debut

volume is both the starting and the destination point of the entire philosophical journey of Mihai Şora (Dragomir 2009, 104). So all subsequent developments are actually enlightening extensions (sometimes very ample and complicated), but did not significantly renovate the ontological architecture of *The Inner Dialogue*.

In the following we present the anthropological-metaphysical parameters of *The Inner Dialogue* in a synthetic manner, as they can be identified in the Romanian philosopher's debut book.

In the onset, the assumption of the "created being" (*ens creatum*) is made. Specifically, it is the assumption of *the ontological difference* – an infinitesimal distance that is impossible to cover between *the pure and plenary being* and *the created and poor being*. As a natural consequence of this assumption, the *creature* condition of man, placed irrevocably under the regime of a *finite, precarious and stray existence*, is asserted. And with finitude, precariousness and straying (which allows the existence of freedom) implicitly and somehow inevitably, the assumption of *the temporalization* (of the real *becoming* – "the concrete destiny of the created being") is put into play. Then, to manage somehow "with benefits" the metaphysical situation generated by *ens creatum*, the *ontological difference* and the *temporalization*, the assumption of *ontological redemption* (which does not mean a full and definitive recovery of purity and perfection) is assumed and put to work, but it involves only an exhausting and endless endeavor to disclose *the being* of created being (Şora 1995).

Even if man will never attain the graceful simplicity of a tree, he can choose, through sustained effort, to reach his limits, namely to find fullness. The real purpose of human life is *to be completely what it is within the given limits*, *here* and *now*. But being a "seeker of being", man wanders through the "labyrinth of his inner life", in order to prosper and "bear fruit" like a tree, he is forced to walk a difficult path of struggle with himself (which is expressed by this *inner dialogue*). This fight with "the inner obstacles" is an inevitable one, namely the *drama* of a permanent hesitation between alternatives, since man is not "infallible in distinguishing between his true and

false fruit". And rejecting the "false fruit", which are constantly offered to the human essence by the voice of protean appearances, is the stake and also the challenge of the inner dialogue. To cope with the torment of the inner dialogue, man has at his disposal the "existential-operational" attention (the concentration, the alertness), that can help him choose the "true answers" (Şora 1995, 32-47).

This is the metaphysical basis on which Mihai Sora has endeavored to ensure a strong and fertile ground on which his anthropology could take root. This anthropology can essentially be summarized as follows: wandering – conscious, free and especially fallen – through the corridors of a labyrinth (the inner dialogue), the human being must be subjected to a perpetual test to obtain the certificate of authenticity, to be what it is, within what is possible to be. A test at which only provisional pass can be achieved: a provisional, yet invigorating ontological redemption. And the durability of this metaphysical edifice is permanently ensured by a (meta)supposition: *coincidentia oppositorum*.

To better visualize the condition of *coincidentia oppositorum*, we will briefly present the *ontological model of the zero radius sphere* developed by Mihai Şora, a model which has an allegorical function similar to Plato's "allegory of the cave", and which also has a clear structural similarity with Plotinus's circle model (Cioveie 2011, 359-361).

It is a sphere with a center described as U.P. (*Universal Possibility to be*), a center from which an infinite number of rays extend to the surface, composed of an infinite number of points outside each other, a surface called *Existential Topicality* (E.T.). The radius beginning from U.P. is modulated in a multitude of *Intermediate Possibility* (I.P.), and culminates in *Terminals Possibility* (T.P.), the last stage before E.T. If we unfold the sphere, we get a plan sphere which transposed vertically would represent the geometric locus of interiority, as an equivalent of the (zero) radius, and which horizontally would represent the exteriority, as an equivalent of the surface. Every possibility to be, including the intermediate possibility, is in its way an infinite (but a "good" infinite, in the Hegelian sense – the synthesis of opposites –, not a bad infinite – obtained

through an endless repetition of the same). This infinite without exteriority is called "the infinite of pure compenetration," by analogy with the *coincidentia opositorum*coined by Cussanus: any beings on the E.T. level represent in fact an infinite, because the radius leading from U.P. to E.T. it is null (Şora 1978, 92-119).

## 4. **The feeling of being and the purpose of being**

There is no doubt, Mihai Şora was very well aware (lucid and edified) about the inevitable requirements and challenges of metaphysics. That is why he has set out on the road to metaphysics, trying to confront it. But beyond the urgent need to face the stringent pressures exerted by a world which is at the crossroads, this metaphysical commitment has proven to have a single stake: *the recovery* (*the reiteration*) *of the feeling of being* (*the feeling of fullness*). And so, even when trying to place himself in the framework of metaphysics, Mihai Şora commits a metaphysical offence. Because the supreme stake of his commitment is not *the meaning of being*, but *the purpose of being*. In other words, he is not interested in "what is the being?", because already has a pre-science, a pre-understanding of being.

> „I realize very well that this «to be» does not catch it to its end from me and that even at this end I cannot tell in a comprehensive and appropriate way what I was *given* (occasionally) to *know* about it. I cannot *say* (as I can, for example, about beans and maize): it can only be *mumbled*. But still I *know* it. And yet *directly*." (Şora 1985, 104)

And this pre-science about "to be" is granted by a primordial and overwhelming feeling of being (*feeling of fullness)*:

> „[...] for me [...], what gives meaning to the verb *to be* is a *feeling* –not just any feeling, but a fundamental one (...), an overwhelming feeling (which, in fact, you cannot oppose in any possible way) (...) –, a feeling of *fullness*, and the best name that I could find for this feeling was JOY. And this name I have not acquired at the end of an analysis, but it was *given* to me. It was given *from the very beginning*." (Şora 1985, 25)

So this *feeling of fullness*, equated by Mihai Şora with "the joy of the fact of being," is announced to be a pre(extra)-metaphysical "state", a direct harmony with the being, and

somehow requiring to be recovered (reiterated, recognized as such). But the Romanian philosopher did not give us many details about this *feeling*, which he described as a "mysterious" and "personal" revelation.

For Şora, the question "what is the being?" is unnecessary and even illegal, because the being is completely inexpressible, "impalpable". The Romanian philosopher considers that the single stake (and task) of metaphysics is, in fact, *the purpose of being* ("what can be done with the being?" or "what good is the being?")[8]. Moreover, the task of metaphysics is not to think about *what is* the purpose of being, whereas the feeling of fullness already provides the pre-science of this purpose. Şora considers that the task of metaphysics is, in fact, to think *how one can accomplish* this purpose (the recovery of the feeling of fullness, the "cosmic integration"). Therefore, not only does metaphysics have to direct to a "beyond" (which is identified by Şora as a "transcendent-immanent"), but it should also provide guidance regarding access routes to this "beyond" – thus becoming a wisdom and a vital engagement.

> "Conceptually speaking, I can't conceive an ontology that does not direct to a beyond which is really that of metaphysics. That's why I feel Heidegger's ontology from *Sein und Zeit* as a egology, although the text forces me to not conceive it as a strict limitation to anthropology. And I do not know why, although it speaks of daily life, of the utility of *das Man*, I got the impression that the «fundamental ontology» of Heidegger does not provide a strong ground, because it does not oppose you from *outside*." (Şora 2005,79)

By placing the metaphysics under a different imperative, other than that required by the meaning of being, Mihai Şora not only eludes, but somehow he even diverts the essential task of metaphysics: to be, first and last, a *science of being*. Indeed, it is indisputable that the question "what is being?" is pointless and perfectly devoid of sense (because it already possesses the pre-meaning of being). But exactly this perfect "emptiness" (concealment) makes the thinking be firm and unavoidably detained around (in front) of being. And also to be detained around itself, in trying to confront its own essence.

Although he committed this metaphysical offence, Mihai Şora still remains on the way to metaphysics. Even if his essential stake is the purpose of being, which places him in

anthropological territory (of man as a created being), the Romanian philosopher, however, constantly appeals to the prestige of metaphysics. Therefore, Mihai Șora's anthropology is a *metaphysical* one. All the pieces of his anthropological device receive an "ontological" determination (ontological unity, ontological redemption, ontological wealth, ontological imperative, ontological appetite and so on). In other words, metaphysics is used for the adjectival additions. Once announced and defined as a *science of being*, it does not mean that metaphysics is available freely and efficiently. And even less does it mean that metaphysics can forget or neglect its own essence. On the contrary, once barely announced and defined this way, metaphysics is placed on a single and appropriate framework in order to find (or not to find) some intrinsic essence: *the framework of the being*, and only of the being.

In the following we will make an analysis of the way in which Mihai Șora committed the offence which discredited *the metaphysical dignity (and vocation) of nothingness*, through his escape from (and through) the *coincidentia oppositorum* (on the basis of that *feeling of being*), precisely because nothingness would have radically devastated the anthropological edifice.

## 5. The *Coincidentia oppositorum* and the metaphysical discrediting of the nothingness

First we will elaborate on how Mihai Șora understands the *nothingness*. The Romanian philosopher considers that nothingness does not have the meaning of *non-being*, it does not have the consistency of metaphysical entities which radically delimit the being (uncreated, unchanging, perfect). The nothingness of Șora is only active in the framework of anthropology, of the man as a created and fallen being. Assuming that *being* means *to be completely what it is within its own given limits*, *here* and *now*, at the same time he postulates (only in the case of man) an imperative: *you* (*MUST*) *be completely what you are, within your own given limits*, *here* and *now* (Șora, 1985; Șora 1978; Șora 1995). And precisely through its imperative essence, this "MUST" brings with it the fact of freedom, i.e. the possibility of refusing the implications of this imperative. So, when the man refuses

(through his freedom) to comply with the requirements of his own being, he is in a decayed condition, which equates an alienation, an abandonment of the authenticity of his being. Here, and only here, the nothingness of "Şora" finds its place – he fully identifies with everything that is appearance, inauthenticity, wandering.

But how is it possible to provide such a condition of nothingness? How is it possible to discredit the metaphysical dignity of the nothingness? We can find the answer by examining the way Mihai Şora appropriated the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the way he (anthropologically and metaphysically) took advantage of this. Above all, we should discern the meaning of this *coincidentia oppositorum*.

When *something* tries to reclaim its identity to be *something*, at the same time it affirms its identity to be *something else* (that delimits something which seeks its identity). For example, according to the *coincidentia oppositorum*, when *The Perfection* tries to recognize, to assert itself as Perfection, then it finds that it is also fully identical with *something else* – *The Imperfection*. But this *something else* (which *delimits* and *ensures* the Perfection's identity) does not have a *distinct* shape (as *Imperfection*), but it has the shape (identity) of *Non*-Perfection. And the *Non*-Perfection is, in fact, identical with the nothingness. *It is the nothingness*. Therefore, the coincidence of opposites (Perfection-Imperfection) can only work if the nothingness is evacuated, exiled. The coincidence of opposites can acquire its own prestige only if it discredits the metaphysical dignity of nothingness.

Mihai Şora has not taken any lucid precaution when he assumed and operationalized the *coincidentia oppositorum*. Moreover, in reply to this reproach, the Romanian philosopher would answer that, in fact, there is no need for any metaphysical precaution regarding the *coincidentia oppositorum*, whereas it is no more than an expression of the inexpressible (non-conceptual, pre-metaphysical) feeling of fullness, of that cosmic integration. Or, as Cusanus writes, *via rationis* (thinking) cannot figure out the coincidence between the absolute maximum and the equally absolute minimum. Of

course, both Şora and Cusanus are perfectly correct, but they are sacrificing metaphysics. And the being is even able to accept this sacrifice, but only because *it recognizes itself* (through thought) as being. Otherwise it would be completely impossible to identify that feeling of fullness as such.

The Romanian philosopher has allowed to place his stake on the coincidence (given "from the beginning") between transcendence (the uncreated, unchanging and perfect being) and immanence (the created and poor being, the concreteness) only by discrediting the metaphysical dignity of nothingness, through its exile in the derisory territory of anthropology[9], exile due to that ineluctable, preliminary – pre(non)-metaphysical – *feeling of an existential plenitude*.

The metaphysical discrediting of the nothingness is quite visible in the allegory of the ontological model of the zero radius sphere, a model which attempts to provide an insight into how the *coincidentia oppositorum* works in the case of the *potency-act* binomial. The zero radius which connects the center (*Universal Possibility to be*) with the surface (*Existential Topicality*) of the sphere is not actually zero. Because between the center and the surface of the sphere there is still an infinitesimal distance which is impossible to cover. Of course, Mihai Şora would justify this by saying that *the nullity* of the radius coincides with *the infinity* of the radius. Invoking the same *feeling of being* that grants – in a pre(non)-metaphysical way – the fact of this coincidence. But we say that, in fact, the Romanian philosopher commits a metaphysical evasion.

**NOTES**

[1] According to the fifteenth century cardinal, mathematician, and mystic Nicholas Cusanus (also referred to as Nicholas of Cusa and Nicholas of Kues), the *coincidentia oppositorum* – or "coincidence of opposites" – constitutes the "least imperfect" name for God and was the means by which humanity could achieve religious tolerance and, ultimately, world peace. The doctrine of the *coincidentia oppositorum* as it appears in Nicholas Cusanus's treatises and dialogues has been studied extensively, though not exhaustively. However, we can distinguish five central tenets of this doctrine: (1) *coincidentia* is to be distinguished from *complicatio*; (2) the notion of *coincidentia oppositorum*

encompasses, but is not conflatable with, the notion of *coincidentia contradictoriorum*; (3) in God opposites coincide, and, yet, God is *beyond* the coincidence of opposites; (4) opposing ascriptions are coherently predicable of God; and (5) the declaration that opposites coincide is not necessarily to be construed as the claim that the opposites are identical (Hopkins 2011, 130).

[2] For all citations from books in Romanian, the English translation of the quotations is done by the author of this article.

[3] The meaning of *Da* combines themeaning of "here" and "there," excluding the spatial-relational distinction made by the English words; *Sein* is the infinitive, "to be".

[4] Regarding the meaning of *Befindlichkeit*, Joan Stambaugh – editor and translator of Heidegger's works in English – says: "The word *Befindlichkeit*, which I have translated as «attunement,» needs some qualification and special comment. Another legitimate translation for this word is «disposition» (here one could refer to the French translation which uses disposition). But despite quite compelling reasons to use «disposition,» I decided that «attunement» was the better choice if only because it seems able to avoid suggesting that there are psychological connotations carried in Heidegger's analysis of *Befindlichkeit*." (Heidegger 2010, XXV – "Translator's Preface"). Also, Joan Stambaugh claims that Heidegger told him that in his later work *Befindlichkeit* becomes *wohnen* (dwelling).

[5] Mihai Şora was born on November 7, 1916, in a villagenear Timişoara (Romania). After graduating the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest (1934-1938), he was granted a scholarship by the French government. In 1939, under the guidance of Jean Laporte, he defended a doctoral thesis about *La notion de la grace chez Pascal* (*The concept of grace in Pascal*). In June 1940, he left Paris because of the fascist threat, and settled in Grenoble, where he was appointedto "Jacques Chevalier" University (1940-1945). During this period he developed his first book, *Du dialogue intérieur. Fragment d´une Anthropologiemétaphysique (About Inner Dialogue. Fragment of a Metaphysical Anthropology)*, which was published by Gallimard in 1947. From 1945 to 1948, Şora was a trainee researcher at the "Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique" in Paris. In the fall of 1948, he returnedto the country to meet his parentsagain, but due to political complications, he was forced to remain in Romania. In 1978, after an assumed silence which lasted nearly 30 years, he madehis Romanian debut with *Sarea pământului. Cantată pe două voci despre rostul poetic (The Salt of the Earth. A two voice cantata about poetic purpose)*, on which occasion he promoted "undercover" and in a dialogic formula the *ontological model of the zero radius sphere,*a model that had been already prefigured in *Du Dialogue intérieur*. Under the same vigilant censorship of the communist regime in Romania, he published the volume *To be, to do, to have* (1985), in which he tries to prove the metaphysical competences of the ontological model of the zero radius sphere in the aesthetic, ethical, social and political domains. After 1989, taking advantage of the cultural liberalization, he became increasingly present and prolific in the Romanian culture. In chronological order, after 1989 Mihai Şora published the following books: *Eu & tu & el & ea sau Dialogul generalizat / I & You & He & She or Generalized Dialogue* (1990),

*Firul ierbii / The Blade of Grass* (1998), *Câteva crochiuri şi evocări / Some Sketches and Evocations* (2000), *Filosoficale. Filosofia ca viaţă / The Philosophical. The Philosophy as Life* (2000), *Mai avem un viitor? România la început de mileniu(în dialog cu Sorin Antohi) / Do We Still Have a Future? Romania at the Beginning of the Millennium (dialogues with Sorin Antohi)* (2001), *Locuri comune / Common Places* (2004), *Clipa şi timpul / The Moment and the Time* (2005), *Despre toate şi ceva în plus. De vorbă cu Leonid Dragomir / About Everything and Something More. Talking with Leonid Dragomir* (2005).

[6] Cristian Preda delivers some arguments to confirm this marginalization of the medieval cardinal: "Nicolaus Cusanusis not mentioned in the Romanian philosophy textbooks, but the situation is not very singular, because he is not even present in French high school textbooks, although much time has passed from the public rediscovery of his texts. […] Generally, the rediscovery of Cusanus in the nineteenth century coincides with the moment Morin's article «Nicolas de Cusa» was published in *Dictionnaire de théologie scolastique*, vol. II, Encyclopédie théologique Migne, XXII, Paris, 1856." (Preda 1997, 268).

[7] „In philosophical writings, rarely does anyone use such long sentences (some covering more than one page), with so many digressions and parentheses, and repeated exchanges of lively dialogue contained in a single sentence." (Nemoianu 1995, 232).

[8] Although he asserts with obvious conviction that "the explanation, the basis and the purpose, i.e. «why?», «what?» and «what for?»" are inevitable challenges that philosophy must confront, however the Romanian philosopher evacuated the basis of the being from the territories of metaphysics (because the basis of the being – "what is the being?" – is entirely inaccessible and inexpressible) (Şora 1985, 75).

[9] By saying "derisory" we do not promote some arrogant misanthropy, but we are just referring to the metaphysical incompetence of the beings (including human being). In this regard, we evoke the gesture of Martin Heidegger: after he completed the existential analysis (in *Being and Time*), the German philosopher endeavored to give up the metaphysical aspects of *Dasein*, taking a step back, to (re)orient his gaze towards the ontological difference, more precisely towards the being. In other words, Heidegger was quite awareof the "anthropological" failure of ontological difference, about the metaphysical incompetence of beings (of *Dasein*).

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# The Odyssey of the Body between Communication and Mediation*

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**Abstract**

The present paper investigates the status of the body as an image and its new forms of cultural coding. The first part analyses, from the historical point of view, the dualism of the relation soul/body marking the essential changes that it had experimented through the history of the occidental thinking. As an example, modern philosophy introduces a change of perspective by representing a soul immanent to a body like an essence immanent to a phenomenon. This gradually leads to the idea that what makes us unique and gives us individual identity is in fact our body since it is the body itself that renders the generically universal consciousness a self-consciousness. The next step analyses the mutation from body-communication to communication-body relation, from the idea of body-language to body-communication witch was possible and could only develop in an environment dedicated to the therapy of interpersonal relationships or, generally speaking, of communication. The last part of the text develops the idea of the Swiss anthropologist Adolf Portmann in which the surface of the body is not a simple protective coat but a special sense organ that functions in the most various ways, primarily to create an appearance defined as what is visible, what is actually being revealed.

**Keywords**: image, body, soul, communication, mediation, language, interpretation, appearance

At the end of a century of rehabilitation, the body seems today to be one of the winners of our times. Treated as an enemy in Plato's philosophy and in certain aspects of the

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Christian religion, the body has changed its status from one of exclusion into one of dominating discursive power. Once concealed under various garments that obliterated its sensuality and trained through different ascetic techniques to surrender to the primacy of the soul and to restrict its "animality" in favour of a representation closer to divine redemption, we encounter it today, freely performing on the altar of our civilization, on the screens of our TV sets, of multimedia gadgets and of other sensation engendering devices.

The body is nowadays in complete control of its presence which is no longer subjected to something or somebody else; the light in which we perceive it today, the place it has gained and the attention it is given prove the fact that we are facing a new form of cultural encoding. An entire range of activities–massage, fitness, aerobics, body building, dozens of therapies, hundreds of body modelling techniques–are exclusively dedicated to the body. Moreover, the pharmaceutical and medical industries place it at the core of their preoccupations. Everybody seems to contribute to a cult of the body which does not compel it to make special efforts, as those usually associated to work or sports training, but to perform various easy actions meant to offer it pleasure and relaxation.

The continuous medical efforts and spectacular endeavors of new communication media place the body at the core of Western civilization. The new star of the day cultivates its own spontaneity in the name of naturalness and authenticity and against the old religious and moral norms. Visual arts are the first to show their obvious openness to the body to the detriment of the soul; such manifestations as artistic performances, surgical interventions with artistic intentions, relational aesthetics or different gadgets that invite interaction all demand the presence of the body in its full vitality. Briefly, beauty is entirely corporeal nowadays and if we do celebrate anything at all, we celebrate the vitality of life itself–as the last form of the sacredness of our world.

## A brief history

When following the history of the soul-body relationship we come up against a series of unhappy conjectures marked by

dualism, according to which these two inseparable entities fight for supremacy. One has to lose in favour of the other and vice versa, in order for each to accomplish its destiny. To support either of them is to alienate the other as we are confronted with an insoluble contradiction with respect to their management.

For a long time, the body was considered to be a formidable enemy in Western culture, well rooted in certain Christian denominations and in Plato's philosophy. Starting with Greek Antiquity the body was ostracized by the great Orphic tradition brought into the west via the Pythagorean philosophical school of thought, especially the Platonic school. Orphism is an essential stage in understanding the history of the body and its relation to the Western tradition. The Titans devoured Dionysus but his heart escaped this act of cannibalism; Zeus struck the Titans with his Lightning and brought Dionysus back to life by reviving his heart. This myth suggests that the human being is born out of the Titans' ashes that resulted from Zeus' punishment and that, accordingly, within the human being the soul–the good element inherited from Dionysus, coexists with the body–the bad element inherited from the Titans.

The Orphic practices tell us that Orpheus is the one who brings redemption through a series of techniques and rituals and that final deliverance cannot come outside an Orphic existence based on *askesis* and body privations which, in the end, will lead to a complete detachment from earthly sins and weaknesses and even from corporeality and bodily existence.

This visible dualism of Greek philosophy as introduced into Christian thought–via Plotinus and Plato's early writings–proves the asymmetrical relationship between body and soul: the body is a mere receptacle, a residing place for the soul which is infinitely more valuable. In *The Elements of Judaism*, Brian Lancaster highlighted the general rejection of the spiritual values implied in bodily action: "Spirit and matter were irreconcilably divided. The dualist principle became the seed of a powerful rejection of the body." (Lancaster, 1993: 57)

There is no doubt that until the beginning of the twentieth century there was a hierarchical dualism in the relation soul-body, accompanied by a moral rigor which was

meant to discipline the latter. The body has been continuously devalued by religion (mainly by Protestantism) and philosophy and kept under control through discipline and violent submission, through rigorous religious and social practices and through an aesthetic idealization of its artistic representation.

In modernity the body and soul relationship was balanced when the idea of immanence emerged in Western thought to tell us that the essence resides in the phenomenon and that reason and body play an equally important part in valuing life. This change was triggered by Descartes who distinguished between the *res extensa* that designated the body as materiality ascribed to science (thinking) and the soul, which cannot be assessed as immaterial and belonging to the church. The gap between soul and body inherited from Christian thought and Platonism was diminished by the Cartesian theory of the passions, which introduced something different from the conscious mind, still bound to the body but not yet referred to as the unconscious. The passions, Descartes said, are "those perceptions, sensations or emotions of the soul which we refer particularly to it, and which are caused, maintained and strengthened by some movement of the spirits" (Descartes 1985, 339; AT XI 349)

Eighteenth-century German philosophy revived the soul/body dualism by raising the stakes through the invention of the *ego*. If Descartes conceived the body exclusively in spatial terms, with a strict delimitation in regard to the soul, in German philosophy the body starts to contribute to a larger extent to the understanding of the *ego*. Hegel's and Kant's German rationalism made it obvious that the basis of the world we inhabit is the subject and not some preconceived form or substance. Reality is now the result of a construct generated by the intellect and the psyche. The person, as a subject, becomes the central element, since the restructuring of the entire world starts from the subject. The Kantian principle of equality between thought and experience will finally lead to the equality between consciousness and body (with a particular focus placed on the intellect). It therefore follows that the body, thanks to its perceptive apparatus, plays an important part in knowledge

acquisition, though the elements of knowledge acquired through perception are ranked as secondary qualities.

Hegelian immanence and its introduction of the theme of alterity turned out to be considerably more influential. Alterity implies the revaluation of the body-consciousness dichotomy; the Other is perceived as a body since it is first presented to us as a body and not as consciousness. Starting from there, the body takes the first step towards entering the realm of communication as a means of expressing consciousness. The introduction of the idea of alterity, as well as of that of immanence, was the moment when the body found a place of its own in Western modern thinking. While the soul continued its dialogue with divinity, the body seemed to be a mere host of the soul. With the introduction of the idea of modern immanence, the body becomes the strategy a soul uses to present itself to another soul.

The consequence of such ideas is that the relation between I and the Other ceases to be conceived solely as a relation between two personalities but also, and always, as a relation between two bodies. Hence, if somebody's gesture to caress me transforms my body into a person or a soul, as happens when one is in love, somebody else's gaze can reduce my body to an object when I do not count as a person for that somebody, as happens in the case of physical violence or in medical procedures. Our corporeal existence offers not only the possibility of love and passion but also that of violence and abuse. For a philosophical, officially academic cast of mind, the body remains the prisoner of metaphysical representations. It is worth mentioning that philosophy was tributary to an ideology of reason in order to be able to genuinely rediscover the body, limiting itself to an empirical rehabilitation. More recently though, the socio-humanistic disciplines that replaced metaphysical thinking turned out to be more daring but not strong enough to really place the body at the core of Western civilization.

The beginning of the twentieth century heralded a new modality of thinking the body, visible at a theoretical level. Freud's and Jung's psychoanalysis was the first to reverse the relation soul-body, using the theory of sexuality. This was

followed by more recent theories such as ethnology and anthropology which initiated the discussion of various corporeal techniques and of the human body as a cultural construct. The issue was later on taken over and developed in turns by sociology, as an analysis of the social through the body, and by phenomenology as a discussion of the body in relation to the Other's body.

Starting with Nietzsche and continuing with Foucault the subject undergoes an archeological analysis. Punishments and power techniques place the subject under the Other's control and make him dependent upon the Other, constructing his identity through self-knowledge and consciousness. From this moment on, the body has been finally able to turn itself into a battle field for feminist activism which, in the light of corporeal-sexual and gender identity, pursued the theoretical interest in the body and deepened it through deconstructivist strategies.

Modern philosophy introduces a change of perspective by representing a soul immanent to a body like an essence immanent to a phenomenon. This gradually leads to the idea that what makes us unique and gives us individual identity is in fact our body since it is the body itself that renders the generically universal consciousness a self-consciousness. At the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to Nietzsche's philosophy and Freud's psychoanalysis, the theoretical representation of the subject changed yet further: frustration, inhibition, censorship, and punishment became strategies that contributed to the birth of the subject and its representation as a body. Our body individualizes us in a different way than the one performed by the physiological particularization of our consciousness. Our incarnation is traumatic. The unconscious with its neuroses and psychoses is the place where traumas are inscribed into our individualized existence.

The various forms of inadaptation are generated by the fact that during our existence the body conceals effects that we cannot know from the start but that we can identify in our complexes, frustrations and sufferings that make our live really ours. That is because, unlike our instincts, the pulsions theorized by psychoanalysis are not connected to specific

conditions of satisfaction but possess an unlimited plasticity and are always ready to replace their objects and purposes. This traumatic charge inscribed within the body–evaluated by psychoanalysis and used as its discursive support, will gradually allow us to discover the existence within the body of a sensitive life that can be re-programmed.

## From body/language to body/communication

The possibility of stepping out of the substantialist metaphysics of the body initiated by Freud and Jung arose at the same moment as the philosophical thematisation of communication and the semiology of French structuralism, which was also centered on verbal language. In this way, the effective mutation from body-communcation to communication-body relation, from the idea of body-language to body-communication was possible and could only develop in an environment dedicated to the therapy of interpersonal relationships or, generally speaking, of communication.[1] The appearance of the idea of body as language, first generated by psychoanalysis for pseudo-medical purposes, introduced a new sense in communication. The skin as a sensory organ had long been ignored, considered to be the sense of the body, the only sense that engendered a double sensation, both active and passive, internal and external. Perceived as an exterior coating, it allows the psyche to represent the body in its relations with the exterior world, with space and time.

"The most profound thing in man is his skin," Paul Valéry used to say (1971-1974, 215-6). Gilles Deleuze has taken over and reinterpreted these words as the revelation of the limitation (*effet de surfaces*) paradox: "it is by following the border, by skirting the surface, that one passes from bodies to the incorporeal." (Deleuze 1990, 10) This point is particularly emphasized by Didier Anzieu, who extends Freud's notion of the ego as a mental projection of the surface of the body, and claims that the sensations connected to the skin are the matrix for the constitution of psychic apparatus. The concept of the "skin ego" is therefore fundamental. The body is the self-skin and reason is just an alteration of our skin, its capacity to release the images it engenders beyond our body (Anzieu 1985,

40). The surface of the body is not a simple protective coat but a special sense organ that functions in the most various ways, primarily to create an appearance defined as what is visible, what is actually being revealed. It can be regarded as the limit of our organism, the place where it differs from all the rest and, at the same time, where it acquires a point of contact with the rest of the world. It becomes an organ, a site of life and existence, an organ of transparence and ornament, according to which what is most exterior in us speaks of the innermost, and this interiority is the story that our form never ceases to communicate.

From a completely different perspective than that of communication, the Swiss anthropologist and biologist Adolf Portmann (1967), theorizes that the appearance of any living creature is not a minor or accidental feature, but the exercise of a specific type of power. He understands the visible aspect of an animal as the self-representation of individuality. By this he refers not only to the optical-acoustic and olfactive features specific to each individual while in a state of rest, but also to his/her movements, to all his/her manners of expression and manifestations in time and space. It is no accident, he states, that the technical concept used to designate the biological identity of any living creature gives in fact a name to its sensitive appearance, its species. Briefly, our first image is our skin, our first appearance/apparition is given by our skin and its extension determines our relation with the exterior world. In defining our appearance we always redefine our nature, and vice versa: every time we modify our nature we also modify our appearance or species, in other words, we "change our skin". To put it differently, appearance is the equivalent of life itself since everything alive has a skin. The skin is the one element that defines the animal as an entity living on and within its own appearance/apparition.

The essence of this *metaphysics of the skin* is focused on the moment when the surface of the body loses its transparency, becomes visible and acquires a visibility in full process. Of course, Portmann refers to the representation of nature from the perspective of performativity, according to which all species can be reduced to those modes of

representations that living beings were able to choose in order to present themselves to the world. Obviously, the individual cannot be separated from the habits that shape his mode of existence and manifestation; similarly, any living creature cannot be separated from the particular fashion–as image flow– that defines its belonging to one species or another, to one type of representation or another, or to a particular identity. According to Portmann there is a "dividing line which separates the organic forms which can see one another and those which are never able to look at each other – a boundary between two stages in the intensity of living." (Portmann 1967, 108)

Coming now to the relation soul–body, but still from the anthropological perspective, and the theory of communication, we notice that the dynamism of this relation is enriched with the idea of body as language, of body/communication. Corporeal or generally non-verbal communication refers to facial expressions, physical appearance, movements and gestures, tactile messages, voice characteristics, various types of behaviours determined by time and space, and engenders differences of gender, age and culture. Put together, these types of representative-expressive actions have rapidly gained poetic value and much more than that.

The possibility of conceiving of the body as an expression generating entity is based on a theoretical and pragmatic revaluation of the "sensitive" in communication, as first performed by Paul Watzlawick and the Palo Alto school. Watzlawick basically took over and developed Freud's body-language formula, thereby significantly contributing to the consecration of the body as language, as body-communication. This change is the result of rejecting the dietary-referential system, formulated by Freud and Jung, in favour of analyzing daily language and inter-corporeal relations. "Relationships are not aspects of first-order reality, whose true nature can be determined scientifically. Instead they are pure constructs of the partners in the relationship, and as such they resist all objective verification." (Watzlawick 1984, 238) The clearest consequence of this move is the elaboration of the distinction between analogic and digital in communication and the act of providing the body with analogical communication.[2] From this

moment the correlation communication-body becomes the identity body-communication that places the body within the web of social significances: "an interpretation of reality is only an interpretation and not reality itself." (Watzlawick 1984, 215)

When all the barriers that separate the body from social realities are destroyed and the body is placed at the core of communication, a theoretical revaluation of the "sensitive" is required. This is no longer understood as the exclusive realm of the senses as these are not the ones to define the conditions of possibility, but are instead conditioned by the apparently trivial, general and decisive fact that any living being shows itself to other living beings in an act that might coincide with communication. Any living being is first and foremost an appearance, an image or form. The *appearance*, as an act and phenomenon, is not accidental but can be viewed as the manifestation of a specific power or a faculty whose exercise can again be regarded as the manifestation of human life and of the life of other species, as an expression of a genuine poetics of surfaces. Therefore, to live means to appear since anything that lives possesses a skin and lives at the surface of its skin. Biosemiotics teaches us that the skin is what allows the representation of the animal as an entity living only on and in its own appearance.[3]

Consequently, thanks to the skin, the entire body becomes an organ meant to be seen – *á être vu*, a metaphysical organ whose discourse is essentially based on appearance and draws its force from the ornament. Hence we can infer that if the specific features of an individual acquire a definite body only through the exercise of appearance, if any type of nature has to possess a cosmetic façade or an ornament in order to be able to reveal itself and has no other means of expression but the power of the ornament, the nature of any identity is equally aesthetic and biological.

Generally speaking, cosmetics highlights individuality and functions at the same time as a connection between the body and the exterior world. The *poetic* content of appearance– the ornament or the garment of appearance–is relational, in the sense that the spiritual movement specific to the self of appearance lies in its power to recognize itself in something

alien which is appropriated precisely through this movement. In other words, in order to make ourselves recognizable and to have an identity, we have to face something that does not belong to us. This is the paradox of body cosmetics as well as communication: the fact that a completely alien fragment of this world gets closer to us and to our body than our body itself. An extrinsic piece of our body, entirely made up only of images, succeeds in containing and expressing our soul, its psychology and character better than our anatomic body might actually do. In cosmetics, the individual inhabits things to the extent to which these things become identical with its form.

Georg Simmel has defined the ornament as a frame where corporeal and psychological elements are inextricably mixed together, "the outwardness and the inwardness of their forms weaving into one another" (Simmel 2009, 332). The halo of the ornament and the attention it attracts boost and enhance its bearer's personality: it becomes more prominent or more intense when ornamented in one way or another. Thus the sensitive elements of the ornament "increases or enhances the impression of the personality, while it functions as its, as it were, radiation." (Simmel 2009, 333)

Cosmetics must be understood here as a faculty of the individual, as the power of a body to possess a garment, to transform a part of the exterior world instead of transforming its own appearance and truth. We can infer from this that any act of embellishment implies a displacement of the *self*; in this way the self becomes identical with certain objects, substances, images, shapes or colors which are, in reality, totally ambiguous for us. In the same way, through any type of ornament we operate an identification between us and a particular feature of the exterior world, making it bear the imprint of our spirit and pretending that our personality emanates from this very feature. The first condition of our identity is accordingly the exercise of this faculty which, when taking into account its form and relational nature, coincides with communication. All old and new forms of corporeal communication such as dance, fashion, body painting, plastic surgery, art performance, tattoos and even appearance itself bear the mark of this faculty.

## From the sensitive body to the mediality of the image

In relation to speaking and to the text, the image seems to occupy the same position in our culture as the body in relation to the soul. The problem of corporeal communication thus becomes the problem of images: as soon as images are censored, gestures also disappear in the field of culturally regulated communication. That is why it is difficult to decide whether it was the image that re-inserted the body within the cultural discourse of contemporary civilization or, on the contrary, the body that re-inserted the image as understood in Western civilization. "For the message of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs. […] This fact merely underlines the point that 'the medium is the message' because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action." (McLuhan 1994, 8) As image, the body is an essential presence for the new media, especially for those relying on image proliferation. The shooting camera and, generally, the whole range of gadgets meant to capture images, reorient the public's attention towards the human gesture, action and behaviour. Pride of place goes of course to the mirror as an object and has done since the Renaissance; painting occupies the second place followed, more recently, by photography. But it is cinema that considers the action and behaviour of the human body as communicational language. The image thus produced and distributed changes the relation between the digital and the analogic in signified systems which are the basis of cultural messages and this change is visible in the significant part the body is assigned in communication.

Before the appearance of the printed book, the analogic signs were predominant in popular culture. With the advent of the printing press the human body lost its expressive value, because the spirit found a real body materialized in a book, and feelings and attitudes started being expressed in texts, deemed better suited to the expression of ideas. We should not conclude that the advent of printed texts and the emergence of the book as a new mass cultural coding triggered any decline in image

production. What really changed was the type of image coding and decoding as a consequence of an invention or a technique of transmission and distribution of the sensitive (the printing press and book distribution).

We have already seen that the presence of the body as a sign in communication denies the arbitrariness or the non-motivation of the sign, to the benefit of the analogic or, more precisely, to the benefit of the image. In fact, images behave like all other signs in that they render visible the spiritual invisible, giving it substance to help it materialize, and blur the materiality of the visible through stylizing and de-substantialization. The image accordingly appears as a semiotic game of transition from the invisible to the visible – the "social as a script" Baudrillard says (1995, 88) –, but in Western culture this transition is mediated by the text. If, by means of texts, the written word builds an image that tries to represent the soul, images, acting now like signs, blur the materiality of the body, rendering it an evanescent, ever-changing presence. Therefore, it is not the body as presence that is reiterated but new possibilities of signification and new signifying systems that are engendered, thereby extending the civilizing codes and reappraising human nature. What is obvious in this change is the importance given to the image as sensitivity.

Since the concept of image has already been mentioned several times, a few remarks may be in order to better define the terms used when discussing the image both as an ontological support and as a product and object of the new technologies and forms of communication.

Taking into account the history of culture and the arts, it becomes obvious that any image is a form of sensitivity in itself. If we take the physics of the sensory systems as a point of reference, the image represents the existence of forms in a manner that is different from their natural subject, as in the case of the mirror or of any other type of image capture or representation. Our image corresponds to our form beyond our materiality, in other words any form that can cease to exist in its own place and comes to exist outside itself can become image.

To be an image means to exist outside ourselves, to be aliens to our own bodies and souls; to be alienable. To put it

differently, forms are capable of acquiring a status which is different not only from the natural being they assume in their corporeal existence but also from the spiritual status they assume when they are recognized and perceived by others.[4] For any form to become an image is to experience the exile out of their own locus to an additional space, which is neither the space of the object nor the space of the subject but derives from the former and nourishes on and gives life to the latter. In both cases our form becomes image when it is able to exist beyond ourselves, beyond our body, without becoming a body in its turn but simply remaining at the surface of other objects.

Aristotle and Descartes among others taught us that the sensitive does not coincide with the *real*, as the world is not sensitive in itself but becomes sensitive only outside itself. Aristotle highlighted this aspect in his *De anima*, demonstrating that it is not enough to make a subject interact with an object in order to create a perception; it is first and foremost necessary that the situation or that thing *become a phenomenon* and then the phenomenon, exterior to the thing itself, meet the sensory organs.

The process that renders things sensitive is different in time and space from the process that makes them come into existence. The corollary of this is that the image is neither an act of perception nor the perceived object, but the form of the object as pure perceptibility and latent perception capable of acting outside us.

The engendered images are forms projected into the exterior world. Their existence is not structurally different from the phenomena people can interiorize. The study of intentional projection allows us to understand to a certain extent the nature of what we generally call experience or, in a broader sense, knowledge. If the faculty of knowing can be associated with the capacity of interiorizing a mundane element, all beings that are able to know are able not only to receive and acquire forms but also to project their knowledge upon the exterior world and to make their interiority exist outside their being. Conversely, any sensitive element projected into the world is bound to bring a part of the world to the person that projected it. It results that any time we utter something we know, a part

of us is carried into the world and is alienated, and so is our own interiority. The soul, for instance–when reading a book–or the body–when watching a film or dancing–is precisely what can emerge from itself under the guise of an image and become sensitive. Any projective act, mark of the sensitive life, transports a particular form of spirituality into the world, taking it outside itself and alienating it.

Finally, sensitive life is the object which undergoes the exercise of culture, work and institutions; it is the manner in which and through which what we call spirit has to engender and discover its own forms of existence. Most social, political and cultural processes that impinge on people's forms of existence and general modes of life are focused upon the sensitive life. A pertinent demonstration is offered by *fashion*, taken as a generalized phenomenon, as it defines the world where we act as sensitive beings in relation to the others from a social perspective; fashion shows that one of the most urgent, constant and precise actions and preoccupations of any society is to define the manner in which each of its members has to be perceived by the others. Maintaining this relation relies on the capacity to produce images of things, a sort of commerce with and production of the sensitive.

Image projections, drawing and music, for example, and a large part of human spiritual activities derive their force from this capacity to stabilize forms in specific *media*, in a constant circuit of exchange, to translate them into a different medium before they re-enter the world of things. The French thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari[5] use the phrases *plane of immanence* or *image of thinking* in order to define this *media*lity. We should not understand from here that thinking is the only element that defines human life, as it has the capacity to set the entire body in motion by means of ideas. Life is shaped in fact by the power to free these ideas, to make them acquire a life of their own, the ability to transpose them into a medium that defines human activity. In this tertiary space the limits of human existence and of its realities are being negotiated.

The objectification of the spirit is accordingly achieved in the invisible daily commerce that we establish with the natural

and artificial *media*–if such differentiation might be allowed. To the same extent to which we can experience ourselves only by looking at ourselves in the mirror, our spiritual existence–our image–manages to prolong itself beyond us, into the *media*. Only by dint of images can we give shape to things and succeed in insinuating ourselves inside other living creatures.

Thanks to the sensitive we are made of and that we produce, we can project ourselves outside our beings and exercise our influence upon the world and other living beings. Mediality facilitates the passage of intentional forms from one person to another and makes objects or inanimate bodies bear the trace of the existence going on around them and stay as such. The sensitive is not only the place where forms are extracted from matter but it is also the space that houses the reification process and the alienation of the spirit and of the subjective. Wherever there is sensitive life, the object and the subject become the poles of a bidirectional movement.

Media transform and spiritualize things, creating the possibility of a mundane existence. This mediality is finally the space where the body is spiritualized today. Present-day mass-media and the wide range of communication media double the expression of this game as they have understood only too well that our body is first in a series of perceptions in full process. A body devoid of active perception would not be our body but a sensitive object that we can perceive and experience. Consequently, in order to be–body or soul–we have to define ourselves starting from a series of immediate perceptions which seems to be given and supported today by the continuous trade of images and, implicitly, of the sensitive.

The media space is a natural game in which everything comes to be manifest. It is a scene in perpetual movement that opens the world to unknown possibilities and offers a different life than that any living thing possesses in its matter or in its memory. It is a fragment of the world that allows forms to prolong their lives beyond their nature and beyond their material and corporeal existence and even beyond their self-awareness. As Bourdieu says, "images have the peculiar capacity to produce what literary critics call a reality effect. They show things and make people believe in what they show.

This power to show is also a power to mobilize. It can give a life to ideas or images, but also to groups." (Bourdieu 1998, 21)

**Paradigmatic characteristics**

At the moment of man's appearance on earth as a living being, his nature was conceived from top to bottom, from his transcendental essence to his particular incarnation as a person. The next formula was that of the socially conceived person, from bottom to top. We notice that in both cases, and taking into account the most ordinary human features, the human being is always conceived of as a soul. As long as anthropology analyses human nature starting from the soul, it remains metaphysical. Sociology changes this perspective since its focus is shifted from the soul, the consciousness and even the mind, to the body endowed with a brain, not in the sense of a vulgar naturalism that regards it as an organ, but as a complexly structured thing that proves today be in charge of many of the processes philosophy once used to assign to the soul.

It is worth mentioning that this change is not operated at the level of reality but is a change of paradigm. Man's sociological thought is not defined as characteristic of a social animal but of a natural animal whose ideals are ecological and democratic and who sees sociality as a gregarious mass phenomenon. What gradually disappears together with sociality is the cultural manifestation that gives way to a technological civilization and to its functional rules. The abundance of commercial goods has made cultural rules (which used to compensate for the scarcity of material goods through a symbolic depth) no longer necessary. The members of a poor society, subjects to the social constraints imposed by self-conservation and survival, have been and still are more *cultural*, more inclined towards spirituality, whereas the members of rich societies are more *natural*, more *corporeal*, as they corporeally obey certain rules of civilizing consumerism rather than embracing cultural rituals. In Western civilization the tendency to transform all actions, states and images that the body can generate into goods or services becomes ever more visible. Moreover, what provokes terror in Western culture is the public image of a disintegrated body, a body bereft of life or

submitted to various punitive practices. The actions that generate such images are considered to be non-democratic as the presence of the body in the public space and the interest in communication are the consequence of a particular form of socialization, of a life devoid of ethics, politics and law. Nowadays, normativity starts with the body not with the soul.

In reality, the body has been an interface not necessarily of the soul but of various patterns of cultural programming that acted upon it.[6] The dialectics of the sacred and the profane tells us that any type of desacralization is in a way a re-socialization, to the same extent to which in communication any de-coding is also a re-coding. As Eliade pointed out, "the majority of men 'without religion' still hold to pseudo religions and degenerated mythologies. […] The unconscious activity of modern man ceaselessly presents him with innumerable symbols, and each of them has a particular message to transmit, a particular mission to accomplish, in order to ensure or to re-establish the equilibrium of the psyche." (Eliade 1959, 209, 211)

By imposing corporeality, the Western culture adheres to a special type of communication which is already conceived in a different way than mere transmission of information; by imposing communication as a relation is in fact a celebration of the power of vitality specific to the body freed of its old symbolic and cultural determinations. In this way, the triumph of the body in the public space represents the triumph of the relation over the content, which coincides in turn with the victory of the image over the text.

Today the body juxtaposes with its own image, and the position of this image in the economy of human communication is tightly connected to the problems of human artifacts. These allow the fixation of mental images and their removal outside individual life so as to be used in interpersonal and collective communication. The intensification of vitalism as a result of the proliferation of body images, thanks to the explosion of gadgets used in the vast communication network, is the effect of a new cultural coding based on the affective relationship between the self and the mundane image of the body. My own image reflected by the mirror/screen of a device and its technological proliferation is, literally speaking, the new avatar.

Even if the body disappears today behind its own visibility, in other words behind its own sensitivity, it has to capture and emit, thanks to its iconic status, all its shocking features, all its strangeness, surprise, anxiety, fluidity, even its self-destruction, instantaneity and irreality, in order to become sensorial over and over again. The superiority of contemporary human beings seems to be given by their power to get lost in the sensitive, to such an extent that they actually become able to produce it.

**The body wears the world as a garment**

We have already noticed that our anatomical body and cosmetics are the poles of a reality and of a common game between life and appearance. The mask offers this paradox, the paradox of mediality which makes our body a vehicle to transform us into image and compels us to get closer to images in order to give shape to our body. Under these circumstances, the fact of being in the world ceases to appear as a fall and a form of banishment caused by sin. If the Church sees the human being as the image of God with the obligation to emulate God, postmodernism makes human beings emulate themselves and establish a privileged connection with their own image.

The world today is a secondary body, a garment that can find its materialization in any object as it neither defined by any specific nature nor by any particular substance. It is not the world that brings its inhabitants into existence, but it does give them the possibility to appear as something different. The closeness of the world to the body defines the world as sensitivity, as an ever-changing image. We no longer refer to a precedent or to an extension but to a common place, a middle ground where life and its habits totally coincide. As Paul Virilio noted, "the much-vaunted globalization requires that we all observe each other and compare ourselves with one another on a continual basis." (Virilio 2005, 61)

In more technical terms we can say that the image–as a result of the mask–transforms practices into custom or fashion; we should not understand it as an accessory or an item of luxury but as a space that shelters the most profound and intense nature of everything that participates to the sensitive.

The fact that today the body lives through images must be understood as the individual's transcendental faculty to transform part of the exterior world instead of transforming his own appearance and truth. In the process of this sensitive closeness – "a genuine visual market" (Virilio 2005, 60) – the body becomes whatever is alien and alienable; it is its own medium and each of its actions is a multiplication and a reproduction of itself. The sensorial is the expression of this endless reproduction. The image of the body, the sensitive, becomes the place where its entire genesis is inscribed and where the description of the world is being performed.

**NOTES**

[1] The psychoanalytical theoretical and practical background built around the idea of body-language obviously detaches the body from communication and keeps a certain distance from the social reality it can inhabit. In order to pay greater attention to the curative aspects, mainly transmitted through verbal language, Freudian pshycoanalysis pushes corporeal expression outside communication.

[2] Analogic and digital in classical semiotic terminology distinguish between the motivation and the amotivation of signs

[3] For Portmann in *Animal Forms and Patterns: A Study of the Appearance of Animals*,(1967), the term "Fanera" designates the secret capacity of any animal to transform its own nature in a fashion; he places the substantial element of animal existence in the modes of representation.

[4] As Guy Debord notes, "the spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images." (Debord 1994, 4)

[5] In *What is Philosophy*? the French authors delimit and name tertiary spaces for entire series of creative domains such as philosophy (plane of immanence), fine arts (plane of composition) or science (plane of prospection). „[…] it is inevitable that philosophy, science, and art are no longer organized as levels of a single projection and are not even differentiated according to a common matrix but are immediately posited or reconstituted in a respective independence, in a division of labor that gives rise to relationships of connection between them." (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 91) These tertiary spaces house the negotiation of the limits of these domains and of their contents.

[6] Let's take this example from Bourdieu: „The top competitive sports increasingly rely on an industrial technology that calls on various biological and psychological sciences to transform the human body into a efficient and inexhaustible machine. Competition between national teams and governments

increasingly and ever-more emphatically encourages the use of prohibited substances and dubious methods of training." (Bourdieu 1998, 96, n. 3).

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# Matters of Deliberative Democracy: Is Conversation the Soul of Democracy?*

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**Abstract**

This study addresses the deliberative democracy from a critical perspective, highlighting the benefits of the deliberative turn. Among the deliberative democracy's benefits the study includes: community-generating power, improving the accuracy of decisions, democratic legitimation of political power, democratic accountability, shaping policy by market-testing, informing public policy process. But beyond deliberative democracy advantages which are recognized by most scholars, it still remains the issue of the possibility of real-world deliberative democracy. The study presents a number of possibility conditions for deliberative democracy and several models of deliberation that can be extended (deliberative polls, citizens' juries, national issues forums, referenda). We particularly discuss the deliberative democracy's scale problem. The most important research questions in the present study are: How do we go from micro to macro-deliberation? Who is entitled to a say? What counts as good discourse and deliberation? How citizen deliberation can have consequences in democratic practice? The main idea is that deliberative democracy in practice implies a rethinking of politics and its feasibility is part of its desirability.

**Keywords**: deliberative democracy, democratic accountability, decision-making process, public opinion, conversation

## 1. Is deliberative democracy just an ideal?

Reassigning the democratic theory in light of the deliberative turn is very much a work in progress for the

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community of democratic theorists. Using a simple definition, deliberative democracy refers to a democratic government that provides a central role for rational debate. What do we mean by deliberation? Deliberation will be an unrestrained and free exchange of arguments and practical reasoning that could change preferences and opinions. Two issues related to deliberative democracy already arise. Even if public deliberation in this regard is aimed to a rational agreement, it is likely that it will fail in reaching a consensus. Another issue related to public deliberation advanced by many authors is the cognitive dimension involved and the inquiry whether deliberation's intent is to generate a particular type of knowledge or not.

There is an obvious attraction to democratic deliberation in democracy theory literature, and the use of "deliberative" attribute by John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas to describe their normative conceptions of democracy (even different) is an additional proof to the current popularity of the concept. Why deliberative democratic model is more desirable than a non-deliberative model? This study seeks to establish the benefits of the main arguments advanced in favour of the current conception of deliberative democracy. We agree with Robert Goodin (2012) who summarizes the issues involved by deliberative democracy as in the following lines:

> "Democracy should be designed in such a way as to encourage people to come together to discuss common problems and agree to solutions; as to enable citizens to see things from each other's point of view, understanding others' interests and arguments as well as one's own; as to encourage citizens to engage actively with one another in the joint management of their collective affairs, and in that way to develop their own capacities and perspectives." (Goodin 2012, 2)

Scholars spotted and agreed about numerous benefits of deliberative democracy such as: community-generating power, improving the accuracy of decisions, democratic legitimation of political power, democratic accountability, shaping policy by market-testing, informing public policy process. All these merits are not a subject for debate or controversy. But besides the benefits afore mentioned is deliberative democracy just an ideal? Deliberative democracy movement is concerned with

finding ways of putting the theory into practice. Scientists and political leaders have to find ways of connecting micro-deliberations to macro-political decision-making. There are some good practice models for public deliberations such as citizens' juries, consensus conferences, deliberative polls and others, which show how deliberative democracy could work in practice. But for deliberative democracy not to be just an ideal, we have to think about what counts as good deliberation, the effects of public deliberations and the influence of deliberations on decision-making process.

First, we have to clarify when deliberation begins. Some of deliberative democracy supporters prioritize "talking as a decision procedure", therefore discussion and deliberation are not simply an exchange of information but a procedure that leads to a decision. For others, deliberation consists principally in interpersonal communications; thus the discussion is not seen as an end in itself. It is a means to a more advised and consistent decision. Even when talk does not 'settle' things, it clarifies them. We will quote Goodin's ideas again, as we agree with the argument that deliberation has an internal-reflective sort of implication:

> "Internal-reflective processes of democratic deliberation within are relatively more central to the process of democratic deliberation, and external-collective processes of formal discursive interactions less central, than commonly supposed." (Goodin 2012, 51)

To clarify the main issues involved by deliberative democracy in practice and not just as an ideal, we should emphasize the fact that there are two stages within deliberation process: information phase and discussion phase. It is perfectly possible for deliberation to have a major effect even if it does not change any attitudes by strengthening people's confidence in their prior attitudes or emboldening them to act upon them. Let us suppose that instead of highly polarized symbolic attitudes, what we have is mass ignorance or mass apathy or non-attitudes. There again, "people's engaging with the issue – focusing on it, acquiring information about it, thinking hard about it – would be something that is likely to occur earlier rather than later in the deliberative process." (Goodin 2012, 59) It is something that is most likely to occur

earlier within individuals themselves or in informal contacts, in advance of any formal, structured group discussion.

In order to become reality, we have to think of deliberative democracy as a model growing out from small-scale face-to-face interactions. In order to apply this model to a larger scale, a new institutional structure is required. The main aim for deliberative democrats is to find ways of linking the benefits of small-scale deliberation with the decision-making process for larger-scale societies. One way for deliberative democracy to be more than an ideal is to build a micro-deliberation system into the core of the formal decision-making process of the larger society (Mansbridge's approach). Another way is to create a link between micro-deliberations and the formal decision-making procedures in more diffuse ways such as something more akin to 'market-testing': will this idea sell or not? Thus the deliberation will be a marketing tool but also a deliberative one (Dryzek's approach). All the issues afore mentioned will be detailed later in the study.

First question for any democratic theory is who is included in the political arena. The same issue arises within deliberative democracy. Who gets a say or, to put it differently, who is entitled to speak? The answer to this question should solve the legitimacy problem of deliberative democracy. For some authors such as Schumpeter (2003, 5) "the characteristics … associated with democracy pertain purely to how decisions are made, not to who makes them", so there is no need to pay much attention to the legitimation problem. This study emphasizes the opposite perspective that considers legitimation of deliberative democracy a main concern and we will discuss this at length.

Moreover, the debates about deliberative democracy are controversial in what concerns methodological issues and the conditions for deliberative democracy's possibility. First, if deliberative democracy is a normative concept that emphasizes public reasoning is all the more important that it can be defended on the basis of solid arguments. Secondly, we need arguments that can help us to make a rational choice between different models of deliberations that are offered today. As a conclusion of this brief introduction, we state that deliberative

democracy can only complement rather than replace the institutional machinery of representative democracy and we have to keep this in mind for the deliberative democracy to be more than an ideal.

## 2. Conditions for deliberative democracy's possibility

As we already stated, the deliberative democracy feasibility is part of its desirability. This study focuses on two main aspects regarding the possibility of deliberative democracy: making use of mini-publics as John Dryzek insists and sequencing deliberative moments.

An important question that could lead us to the conditions for deliberative democracy's possibility is how large groups of individuals could genuinely deliberate together? It seems that large groups could not have a genuine deliberation, so we have to take into consideration courts, civil society, mass-mediated deliberation, e-networks and their mini-publics. These mini-publics are considered by Robert Goodin to be "small enough to be genuinely deliberative and representative enough to be genuinely democratic." (Goodin 2012, 13) These mini-publics seldom encounter the statistical representativeness criteria, and the representativeness in the electoral sense is never accomplished. Such mini-publics might be deliberative polls (Ackerman and Fishkin have an extensive approach of this topic), consensus conferences, citizens' juries, planning cells, "AmericaSpeaks" a project that consisted in a series of 21st Century Town Meetings, national issues forums.

So, for deliberative democracy to be possible in real-world, we have to constitute micro-publics. But how do we constitute a micro-public? There are several proposals in order to constitute mini-publics. Some of them are proposals for electoral reforms, others concern improved consultative procedures, e-initiatives or instruments of direct democracy such as referenda. There is an element of self-selection in all deliberative microcosms: citizens must agree to participate. By consequence, micro-publics lack formal power or authority in the macro-political system. The principle of all affected interests, according to Dahl argues that "everyone who is affected by the decisions of a government should have the right

to participate in that government." (Dahl 1970, 64) What is particular about mini-publics is that they neither claim electoral representation, nor statistical representativeness. The constitution of mini-publics will be a matter of selection among all the affected ones. Sometimes is difficult to deliberate even within a micro-public and a goal must be maintaining their focus on what united them. This is definitely a possibility condition for deliberative democracy.

In order for deliberative democracy to be possible, one should admit its limits. We must ask ourselves how, in general, political deliberations might contribute to the resolution of unsettled questions? Sometimes, desensitizing an issue might be a good outcome of a deliberation process, other times resolving the issue will be the goal. Where there are deep social divisions and conflicts the deliberative process is not likely to resolve the problems via information-pooling. In this case the benefit might be that talking through differences, we might find that there are certain prerequisites we share, and we can then look more closely at where exactly our approaches begin to diverge. Displaying chains of reasoning to one another in these ways shows everyone that one another's beliefs are reasoned, even if they are not in the end persuaded that they are right. To this respect, Gutmann and Thompson write:

> "Think of the requirement of actual deliberation as analogous to a feature of scientific inquiry. Reciprocity is to justice in political ethics what replication is to truth in scientific ethics…The process of deliberation has…epistemic value. Decisions are more likely to be morally justifiable if decision-makers are required to offer justifications for policies to other people, including those who are both well informed and representative of the citizens who will be most affected by the decisions." (Gutmann and Thompson 2002, 158)

Deliberative democracy can be defined as information pooling by means of talk. My point is that if we were just pooling information in the more mechanistic ways, we might never discover that our informants were indeed biased in these ways. In other words an advantage of discursively rather than just mechanically pooling information is that that might help in reaching a consent and overcome the peril of a sequence of communication stages in which each is an exaggerated version of the last.

But macro-political decision-making process cannot be delegated to small groups of unelected deliberators. The decisions of small, unelected groups inevitably lack democratic legitimacy. Those micro-deliberative processes can be used as "focus groups" to help us discover discursively what further information we need to collect and disseminate to democratic decision-makers before mechanically aggregating their views. Thus we are in front of a new way to transform the ideal of deliberative democracy into practice.

Here one raises the question of how to link the micro-level with the macro-level? How citizens' deliberation can be consequential in democratic practice? I have anticipated the answer in the first lines of this chapter: by sequencing deliberative moments. It is important to point out the possibility of *distributed deliberation* with different agents playing different deliberative roles as an alternative to the "unitary model of deliberation" that presently dominates discussion among deliberative democrats (for example Cohen's deliberative democracy's view is criticized for being too unitary). In distributed deliberation model, the deliberative virtues and arguments are on display progressively, over the course of a staged deliberation with various component parts, rather than continuously and simultaneously as they would be in the case of a unitary deliberating model. In support of this perspective we have Mansbridge's notion of "deliberative system".

The *deliberative system* concept was advanced by Mansbridge (2004) whose concern was to criticize the rigorous and useless deliberative standards applied in places where there is no need for them. Mansbridge speaks about a deliberative system which includes a number of forums, a series of standards extended beyond formal representative structures to include the public and private spheres. What is interesting about Mansbridge's idea is that it offers a new way of thinking to deliberative democracy that helps us get out of the deliberative democracy's scale problem. It is true that genuine deliberation forums can only occur in small size, but the interrelationships between communication and representation, authority and accountability within such forums create

legitimacy for deliberative democracy even if deliberative forums are not fully inclusive and representative.

A model of group deliberation based on distributed deliberation is given by the parliamentary procedures and their committees. These committees are small parts of the parent assembly. They deliberate on the issues assigned to them according to their specialization by the parent assembly. After they deliberate and reach a conclusion, they report back to the parent assembly, and their specialized reports will be a basis for subsequent deliberations of the parent assembly. In short, parent assembly delegates certain elements of its deliberative task to other subgroups. Thus we talk about delegated deliberations. My proposal here is that this type of deliberation system used in Parliaments to be generalized to deliberation processes. This model of deliberation may take place in any kind of deliberation within large groups. The deliberative aim will be achieved by dividing up the deliberative task in such ways as it is done within a Parliament. The deliberative task will be divided and then assigned to some sub-units of the larger group. These subsets of the larger group will provide a background and some informational inputs into the deliberation of the larger group with the overall deliberative responsibility and the authority of decision-making. We have already some ideational subsets namely the political parties that can be regarded as ideational facts as well as organizational ones, and they can deliberate in the system described above. There is also an inquiry in what concerns representing diversity. Democratic ideals can nonetheless be furthered, even if not perfectly accomplished, by a politics of *partial presence*, chastening decision-makers by reminding them of the sheer fact of diversity among those for whom they are legislating.

## 3. Deliberative democracy's scale problem

Deliberative democracy's scale problem refers to decisions made after deliberation which appear to be illegitimate for those outside the deliberation forum, while introducing more people in forum would quickly turn into a place of speech pronunciation and not one for deliberation.

Moreover, the legitimacy problem has to do with motivations. In order to have a genuine deliberation, those participants who are enrolled in the forum should meet the above minimum procedural requirements, including availability and reciprocity requirements, leaving aside strategic concerns. Even so, people's predetermined goals, interests and preferences are an essential part of what motivates them to get into political arenas from the beginning.

Dryzek (2001) comes with three solutions to the scale problem: restricting the number of opportunities for deliberation on major constitutional moments or when the stakes of deliberations impact the basic structure of society; restricting the number of people who discuss them and ensure that they are representative of those who do not; partial substitution of internal, individual deliberation with interactive social deliberation, that makes others to be present in one's own thoughts and words. As Dryzek argues, the first solution is not really a solution, since restricting the opportunities for genuine deliberation in society just narrows the number of occasions when the scale problem appears. It does not solve the problem, it just ignores it. Second, the representation solution raises the question of the criteria on which we choose our representatives and their legitimacy, so the scale problem is moved in a new direction. The third option may be attractive at some deliberative times, but is problematic if some groups of people are more "spoken for" than "speakers", as it often was in the case of women, ethnic minorities and other groups at risk of exclusion.

To provide a solution to the deliberative democracy's scale problem, Dryzek appeals particularly to the idea of discursive democracy (rather than deliberative). Following the ideas of Benhabib (1996), Dryzek argues that to the extent that public reasoning is performed by qualified and reasoned actors it exceeds time and space. However, the control of speeches of that sort can be achieved through decentralized networks with multiple actors, egalitarian structured, typical for new social movements. The same idea which overcomes the problem of deliberative democracy's scale problem is found by Habermas

(1996) who speaks of *two-track deliberation model* to some extent equivalent to Mansbridge's deliberative system.

For Dryzek, the legitimacy occurs at the interference of the public sphere with the state and not within individual deliberations on a smaller scale. But Parkinson (2003) is not convinced that legitimacy can be removed so easily at individual level. First, the speeches are not detached from the people, they are partly constitutive to identities and are tools by which people reach their goals. Secondly, the victory of a speech rationality does not depend on the speech, but depends more on the existing power structure in which discourses are embedded. Third, the views articulated in the public sphere are dependent on the number of people who subscribe, who owe allegiance or become co-authors of contesting discourses. So legitimacy is created at the intersection of the public sphere and state, thus deliberative democracy is more than a series of small and closed deliberative moments. This leads us to examine the representation solution and the rules which can legitimize it.

## 4. The legitimacy of representation

Representation can offer us a solution for deliberative democracy's scale problem in what concerns legitimacy, as it provides a way for people who are not physically included in a given deliberative forum, to have the impression at the same time that they have some influence. In other words, we should try to find the rules that make exclusion legitimate, rather than making legitimacy depend on full inclusion, which is impossible. We must think of this in terms of people's perceptions, which seem to be a prerequisite to free us from the deliberative democracy ideal as seen by Benhabib and Cohen.

There are many reasons why we choose representation, some of them expressed by various authors and related to elitist theorists' assumptions about the deliberative capabilities of ordinary people. In this paper, to argue the legitimacy of representation, I take an institutionalist perspective which argues that it is not that ordinary people could not deliberate, but liberal democratic structures do not give them the chance to develop these deliberative capabilities. Therefore, people may prefer legitimate representation for the following reasons as

Parkinson (2003) notes: 1) the representation can be effective in terms of non-participants because some people do not want to deliberate with respect to a given problem, but still have an interest in the results; 2) one's own perception rather than that of elite theories may lead to the idea that personal viewpoints can be better advanced by someone more competent in communication than it would do it alone; 3) the representation itself eliminates the unessential and focuses on specific items.

The next obvious question is: what should be represented? The answer would be the affected people, the legitimacy derives ultimately from society as it is structured. But those affected can not be determined with certainty, they are not unified defined by contextualized, socially-constructed multiple roles and identities as I mentioned above. What should be stressed here is that group memberships are relevant when dealing with affected groups (such as black or women), but it is up to individuals to decide what affiliations to emphasize in certain contexts and thus to determine for themselves who are those affected at any deliberative time. Thus representation becomes a problem when people have to choose other people to represent them and here we are faced with two questions: how representatives are elected? and what is their role? Scholars identify the representation based on a *delegated model* and the representation based on trust, the so-called the *trustee model*. The first model corresponds to an accountability view, the other is based on an authorization model. Arguments about which model is justified are spanning through centuries, but there can not be an answer in general terms, the type of representation depending on the functions expected from representatives at a certain moment of decision.

Hence, the legitimacy of deliberative democracy's forums is still questioned. In my opinion, the trustee model of representation is more acceptable due to the deliberation condition which predicates that all participants will be open to persuasion and influence. Actually by arguing in favor of the trustee model we confirm one of the the major advantages of deliberation, namely the idea that preferences can be changed after a confrontation. Thus, it may be that any decision taken by the deliberative assembly does not resemble with the ideas

introduced in the forum or they can be influenced by an idea held by a minority group, and the new decision not to be representative at the beginning in any way for the the majority of non-participants. This problem was highlighted by Fishkin (1997). How can non-participants to be present at the deliberations of those invested with confidence if the genuine deliberation was excluded? There is no total trust and total delegation therefore legitimate representatives behave both as delegates and as depositories of trust, having responsibility and authorization from their principal. Thus, the best arguments and motivations that convince the representatives within the deliberative sphere must also convince the represented people. It follows that legitimacy can be reached through various deliberative forums, not just within individual deliberative instants. Once the people have been exposed to those arguments by their representatives in their separate deliberations, they also should be persuaded.

The third major question concerns how the representatives are elected. People elect their representatives either directly, or they are selected by the organizers of deliberative forums based on external selection criteria. The question regarding the selection methods is related to the controversy whether different relevant groups should be represented equally or proportionately. Sometimes a legitimate deliberation in a decision-making group should use an equal representation of relevant differences (ex. the same number of men and women, regardless of their actual number in the total population). Parkinson (2004) has recommended the *statistical representation* where the purpose is to gather information and *equal representation* of parties when deliberation has as a result a decision. We note that the problem of selecting the representatives from a statistically point of view is often discussed but the issue of liability (accountability) and the authorization of representatives according to some external criteria is rarely raised.

To go ahead with suggesting wider implications, we need to synthesize the arguments already stated. So far, we tried to identify the rules that make exclusion from the deliberative forums to be legitimate to avoid what is impossible – the total

inclusion in deliberations. Representation is context-specific. The memberships that individuals consider relevant, the representative roles vis-a-vis their mandants, the selection process and the issue of proportionality, it all depends on the subject matter and the purpose of the representative body. Legitimacy depends ultimately not on technocrats assessment, but on the people themselves who decide what is relevant and what is not. The deliberative democracy should be open in the sense that those hypothetically concerned should have the chance to judge the importance (*publicity condition of deliberative democracy*) and the opportunity to influence the rules of inclusion and exclusion. Another argument is that the deliberative representation in order to be legitimate must have only the authority of recommendation and not decisive power, and deliberative groups should be proportional only if the purpose is to collect information and not when the aim is to decide.

Thus we get to the idea that deliberative representation requires representatives to act in a dual role. They should be free to be convinced of better arguments, thus behaving as depositories of confidence (trustees), but they still need to communicate with their principals as delegates, meeting the requirements of accountability and authorization. Any contradiction is overcome if one looks at deliberative moments as incorporated into a broader deliberative system (Mansbridge's perspective).

## 5. What counts as good discourse and deliberation?

Even if I agree with the *deliberative system* concept proposed by Mansbridge (2004) and her critics toward the rigorous and useless deliberative standards applied in places where there is no need for them, we still have to address the issue of what counts as good discourse and deliberation. In the following lines I will present a scheme that synthesizes the criteria proposed by three distinct sets of scholars: Oxford-Berkeley philosopher of language Paul Grice, a team of international relations specialists led by Knud Midgaard, and the team of comparative politics experts led by Jürg Steiner. All this scholars were preoccupied to identify some rules for what counts as a good discourse and deliberation.

Table 1. Standards for good discursive practice

| **Rules of political interlocution** | **Maxims of conversation** | **Indices of deliberative quality** |
|---|---|---|
| Sense | Quantity (contribution as informative as is required) | Open participation |
| Sincerity | Quality (avoid lack of evidence and false statements) | Justification and validity of claims |
| Relevance | Relevance | Consideration of the common good |
| Attentiveness | Manner (avoid obscurity and ambiguity) | Respect |
| Respect | | Rationally motivated consensus |
| | | Authenticity |
| **(Midgaard et al, 2008)** | **(Grice, 1989)** | **(Steiner et al, 2004)** |

The question is whether and how these rules might properly be used to study and to improve genuinely political conversational interactions. We cannot realistically expect all the deliberation virtues (see Table 1) to be constantly on display at every step of the decision process in a deliberative democracy. It is realistic to expect that different deliberative virtues might be on display at different steps of the process. All three perspectives argue that discourse – no matter if it is a conversation, a political interlocution, or a deliberation, it is basically about a cooperative game. But communication in the real world is not the purely cooperative game of the philosophical imagination. Instead communication and implicit

the deliberation processes are a mixed-motive game of strategy, a game of pure competition, in which one person's gains are the other's losses.

## 6. Reconfiguration of politics, deliberative democracy and digital citizenship

Because of the growing electoral absenteeism, the contemporaneous society requires a reconfiguration of the participatory democracy paradigm. Thus we may talk about a deliberative democracy project that progressively prevailed in the '90s, and which was aware of the participation's constraints, ending to suggesting a more "qualitative" approach of democracy theories (this development was called *deliberative turn*). This is the general meaning of the political reconfiguration we focus on in this study, and the broadcasted political debates are the deliberative tools, the means by which citizens are able to remain permanently connected to the social and political reality, being civically involved and able to put continuous pressure on their political representatives. Participating to political debates represents another form of democratic activity at least as of the same effectiveness as voting. These debates are a way of establishing authority and legitimacy which is a source and an end for the community itself (Barbaros, 2014).

I recall Seyla Benhabib's argumentation in favor of network-based model of accountability, a model supported also by Manuel Castells and his "network society" (Castells, 2005) that says: "it is through the interlocking net of these multiple forms of associations, networks, and organizations that an anonymous public conversation results" (Benhabib, 1996, 73) and by consequence this public conversation will be crystallized in public opinion and public demands and accountability toward the representatives. At this point, I admit the benefits that a community or even the society on the whole might enjoy from Internet use. Many authors speak about *digital citizenship* a concept that might be defined as the ability to participate in society online. The *digital citizens* will be those who "use the Internet regularly and effectively– that is, on a daily basis; they use technology frequently for political information to fulfill

their civic duty and use technology at work for economic gain." (Mossberger et al. 2008) In the following lines I will try to identify the benefits and opportunities provided by the Internet for a more active citizenship, and whether individuals with the help of Internet have the capacity to participate fully in society and to make the ideal of deliberative democracy become true. It is obvious that Internet offers us an almost unlimited access to alternative information, many ways to communicate, to interact, to debate and to aggregate opinions. In the same time, digital citizenship requires educational capacities as well as access to technology and skills. The well-known problems such as poverty, illiteracy, and unequal educational opportunities prevent more people from full online participation and in society more generally. We speak about the technology inequality that disables some people from being part of the online society and to some public deliberations that might affect or interest them.

It is largely recognized that education has promoted economic growth and democracy, the question is if the Internet has the prospective to offer the same opportunities of progress for society at large, and to promote the participation of individuals within society's affairs. Does digital citizenship encourage social inclusion, political participation and deliberation? This paper cannot answer to this question. My purpose here is just to point out the opportunity provided by Internet and the digital citizenship for political participation and deliberative democracy. It is obvious that in information age digital citizenship has the potential to encourage the political and economic engagement in society. As DiMaggio argues "the Internet is a unique technology in its varied properties and wide range of uses. It is a telephone, library and soapbox; it is a storehouse of information and channel for communication. (DiMaggio et al. 2001, 321) These diverse characteristics facilitate new forms of involvement that could change the existing social relations. We are talking about a far-reaching technology that definitely has policy implications and will also have spillover effects for society as scholars have already demonstrated (Mossberger et al. 2008). If modern technologies of communication offer new tools for contacting

officials and keep them accountable, discussing issues, and mobilizing citizens, then the network externalities exceed the expectations and facilitate the real-world deliberative democracy.

Nowadays most of the governments, community organizations, interest groups, political campaigns are hosting web sites that offer political information. Actually, we are witnessing a growth of e-government and the explosion of political information on the Web. But despite this we still have disparities in what concerns the frequency of use and digital skills required by Internet together with the fact that the motivation to go online and physical access to the Internet becomes more widespread (Van Dijk 2005, 73). Even though, we have to keep in mind Putnam's idea that "political knowledge and interest in public affairs are critical preconditions for more active forms of involvement" (Putnam 2000, 35), consequently the Internet at least provides us with a lot of information.

The literature concerned with the impact of the Internet focuses its research endeavor to answer to what extent does the Internet provide a greater access to political knowledge, facilitating democratic participation and deliberation. Does the Internet increase political interest and discussion? Which are the possible benefits of digital citizenship for inclusion and the polity? The answers to these questions will influence for sure the deliberative turn and the research concerned with the possibility conditions of deliberative democracy. Anyway, until now scholars tend to agree that civic engagement is a complex concept consisting of political interest, political discussion and political knowledge. We hypothesize that consuming political information online helps citizens obtain higher levels of political knowledge, become more interested in politics, and deliberate with their fellow citizens about politics more frequently. If the consumption of online political information encourages interest, raises political sophistication, and fuels discussion, it may somehow offset a long-lasting trend of declining participation. While the reasons for this decline in civic engagement and participation are multifaceted, and not without difficulty resolved by any single key, the Internet may be an instrument for improving citizenship in the information age, especially in the case of civic engagement among younger.

Consistent with the previous ideas, Norris (2001) argues that numerous features of online interaction may nurture the civic engagement. Among these characteristics the author enumerates the Internet's interactivity, diversity, flexibility, speed, convenience, low cost, and information capacity potentially that allow the public to become more knowledgeable about politics and government – a first step toward greater participation (Norris, 2001). Interpersonal and small group debates are also likely to happen online, in contrast to the inactive consumption of news accessible through other media. Research has shown that online debates are more open and egalitarian than face-to-face meetings. Online communication has also been found to be more diverse with regard to physical features such as race, gender, and age (Rheingold, 2000).

The Internet is said to have more influence than other media on political knowledge. We cannot state that for certain, but intuitively we may advance this idea. Also, media-use in general enables political discussion, but as the Internet provides interactive opportunities for participation, so it should lead to higher levels of political discussion. Political interest is possibly the most important dimension of civic engagement. A more varied and ideological, content available, online may stimulate greater political interest (Smith and Tolbert, 2004).

The influence of digital citizenship is most intense for young people. The young – the demographic segment with the lowest civic and political contribution – have the highest probability of looking for online political information and becoming active in online politics. Because the young are expected to have technology access and frequently use of online news (Lenhart 2003), the consequences for the constant engagement of future generations are significant.

To summarize, we have two perspectives in what concerns the effects of different forms of Internet communication. The first is inspired by the theory of deliberative democracy, which argues that the media do not have a direct relationship with political participation. Instead, media only offer topics that encourage social discourse, which is the mechanism that impacts political activities. This theory foresees that Internet should enable political participation

through opportunities for individuals to meet and participate in discourse. The second approach in which Internet may stimulate participation is through the mobilization efforts of parties and varied interest groups. Briefly, we may argue that Internet promotes participation in three ways: by offering information, by providing channels that permit individuals to meet and discuss politics, and by offering interest groups, politicians, and parties a means for invigorating the mobilization endeavor.

As a concluding thought I state that deliberative democratic theory is experiencing another one of its 'turns' as Dryzek noticed (2010). After an early period of theoretical explanations came a long period of looking for institutional arrangements, followed now by the perspective of a "deliberative system:" (Parkinson and Mansbridge 2012) Empirical studies of deliberative democracy produced rich, qualitative descriptions and explanations, uncovering new practices, and inspiring the creation of new ones (Thompson 2008). But despite the steady interest in deliberation process, unexpectedly little is known about the quality of deliberative processes. While Dryzek (2010, 9) argues that theory and empirics have never been closer, the knowledge is not so systematic. It focuses on deliberation's effects rather than its inner processes. Its normative assessments are still based on idealizations of actors, sites and processes, and it continues to reach to the conclusions in one political context and apply them to others without cautions or explanations. This paper has tried to systematize what we do know about the features and dynamics of deliberative practices. Second, it has tried to provide readers with some arguments in favour of deliberative democracy and some examples of deliberative democracy in action. Also, I have tried to present the empirical claims and questions that arise in the latest theorizing studies on deliberative democracy following the systemic turn. What this chapter has not done is to produce and test explanations concerning why sometimes the deliberation process' impact is achieved, and why sometimes it is not. In my opinion, what is most necessary is not so much more research on this question as more mini-publics – both in order to improve the social

scientist' sample and, mostly, in order to improve the democratic practice's quality.

Debating together is for sure a good way of putting all the possibilities on the table and discovering their strong and weak points. It is a good approach for informing people to the perspectives of others. It is also a good way of making people aware of just how diverse a community is, that such community will be bound by the rules that they adopt. My argumentation is favouring the existence of deliberative procedures in the middle of the political process, but the final decisions must be assumed through aggregative procedures, such as voting.

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# Justice et tolérance. La question du hobbisme du jeune Locke

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**Abstract**

**Justice and Toleration: The Problem of Hobbism in Early Locke**

This article treats about the influence of Hobbes on the early writings of John Locke, *Two Tracts on Government* (1660 and 1662). These Tracts don't have a particular importance in understanding Locke's work, but they are important for understanding the spirit of the time and the intellectual development of the author of the *Second Treatise* (1690). In the *Two Tracts*, Locke defends a conservative position in the matter of government's role in regulating the religious policy. Locke was a puritan, but he was part of that direction of Puritanism which remained attached to the Church of England and, therefore, he was critique of the anarchical spirit of radical and sectarian Protestants. Therefore, he defended the thesis that religious feelings should be subordinated to the reasons of State, as defined by the political authority. For a better understanding of the issues of the *Two Tracts*, we first analyze the political context in which they were written, and the main theories of that time in matter of politics and religion, especially Hobbes's. Then, we show that the main argument of Locke in *Two Tracts* could be considered as hobbist, the "hobbism" being, in that time, the use of a Hobbesian view even in the refutation of Hobbes.

**Keywords**: Locke, Hobbes, hobbism, politics, religion, toleration, justice, natural right, erastianism

## 1. Introduction

En 1660, l'année de la restauration de la monarchie des Stuarts, John Locke était au collège Christ Church de l'Université Oxford, en y étudiant la chimie, la médecine, et la

[*] Traduction du Roumain par Elena Cojocariu.

philosophie de Descartes et de Bacon. A cette époque, rien n'annonce sa grande carrière philosophique, vu qu'il ne publiera rien d'important jusqu'en 1690, l'année de la parution de ses grands œuvres. Même si bientôt on pensera de lui comme d'un prochain savant, c'est surtout dans le domaine de la chimie et de la médecine, vu qu'il est le disciple des grands savants comme Richard Boyle. Pourtant, dès cette année de la Restauration, qui est aussi l'année du départ de John Wilkins de l'Université d'Oxford et de l'ascension de Richard Boyle, Locke fait apparaître les premiers indices que la politique l'intéresse au même titre que la science. La même année il est nommé lecteur de Grec et il rédige un *Premier tract sur le gouvernement,* suivie en 1662 d'un *Deuxième tract* (Locke 1997a ; 1997b), les deux restés non publiés jusqu'en 1967.[1] En 1663, lorsqu'il sera nommé lecteur de Rhétorique, il rédigera les *Essais sur la loi naturelle*, restés également inconnus au public, jusqu'en 1954. Aucun de ces écrits n'a pas été considéré digne d'être inclus dans l'édition des *Œuvres* de Locke de 1823, qui est jusqu'à présent la seule édition standard (Locke 1823)[2]. Il n'est pas difficile d'en comprendre la raison : Locke abandonne par la suite sa carrière à Oxford pour devenir docteur et secrétaire personnel de Shaftesbury et, lorsqu'il reviendra à la philosophie, ses écrits de jeunesse seront considérés pas dignes d'intérêt ou même nuisibles. Ce jugement pourrait aller pour les *Deux tracts* et expliquer l'absence de ces écrits de l'édition de 1823 ; il serait très difficile de leur assigner une place dans l'œuvre de cette *coherent mind* qui était John Locke (Dunn 1969, 203).

En ce qui concerne les *Essais sur la loi naturelle* de 1663, leur absence de ladite édition ne saurait être justifiée par une considération semblable, car ces essais ne sont pas en dissensus avec la position épistémologique ou idéologique de ce John Locke que nous connaissons. Si, dans le *Deuxième traité du gouvernement* (1690), Locke ne développe plus la question de la connaissance de la loi naturelle, c'est parce que la question de la connaissance avait déjà été clarifiée par [tous] les *Essais* antérieures. L'empirisme de Locke a ses racines à Oxford, où il avait lu Descartes, après avoir lu les écrits de Boyle et connu les expérimentations de celui-ci. C'est pourquoi il pensait, en

1663, que la connaissance morale doit être fondée sur l'expérience du genre humain. Un certain nombre d'interprétations de la politique de Locke, au XIXème siècle, ont été faussées par la non-connaissance des *Essais sur la loi naturelle*, non publiés dans l'édition de 1823. Par exemple Charles Vaughan (1925, 163) pensait qu'il y a contradiction entre l'*Essai sur l'entendement*, où l'on affirme l'impossibilité des idées innées, et le *Deuxième traité*, où Locke laisse entendre que la loi naturelle serait le résultat des intuitions morales pures. De telles erreurs ne sont plus possibles une fois que les *Essais* de 1663 sont intégrés dans le corpus lockéen (Locke 2002). La valeur de ces écrits pour l'interprétation de l'œuvre est donc incontestable.

En revanche, Avec les *Deux Tracts* de 1660 et de 1662, on n'est pas dans la situation heureuse de dire qu'ils permettent de clarifier l'œuvre. Pourtant, ils ont leur importance dans l'effort de comprendre l'atmosphère intellectuelle de l'époque et de clarifier la question du rapport entre la pensée de Locke et celle de Hobbes. Dans les deux *Tracts*, Locke défend une position conservatrice à propos du rôle du gouvernement dans la réglementation de la politique religieuse. Locke était puritain, mais il faisait partie de cette direction du puritanisme qui était restée attachée à l'Eglise d'Angleterre et, par conséquent, il était soucieux de l'anarchie provoquée par l'esprit des protestants radicaux et sectaires. Par conséquent, il défendait la thèse que les sentiments religieux doivent être subordonnés à la raison d'Etat, telle qu'elle est définie par l'autorité politique. En même temps, il justifiait l'autorité politique par des arguments théologiques, en disant que cette autorité politique doit être absolue et limitée seulement par la volonté divine. En bon esprit puritain, Locke faisait la distinction entre la foi et la cérémonie. Si la première était considérée comme personnelle et non sujette à la loi publique, la deuxième était vue comme indifférente et, donc, pouvant être soumise à la réglementation.

Cette position est radicalement différente par rapport à celle que Locke soutiendra plus tard. Afin de saisir non seulement l'enjeu des *Deux tracts*, mais aussi le devenir de la philosophie politique de Locke, il convient de faire d'abord une courte présentation de la politique religieuse de l'époque, passer

ensuite à l'interprétation de cette politique par la théorie de Hobbes et montrer enfin quel rapport il y avait entre la pensée du jeune Locke et *Le Léviathan*, « la plus grande œuvre indépendante de la pensée politique en langue anglaise » (Rawls 2007, 23).

## 2. **La politique religieuse de la Restauration**

Le problème le plus grave auquel la Restauration s'est confrontée a été de trouver une solution aux conflits politico-religieux qui, vingt ans auparavant, avaient conduit à la guerre civile et à l'exécution de Charles I Stuart. En grandes lignes, ces conflits dérivaient de l'incompatibilité entre le calvinisme et l'anglicanisme, surtout relativement à l'épiscopat et à la réglementation des céremonies religieuses par le monarque. Cette incompatibilité avait été amplifiée par l'existence d'un mouvement radical au sein de chaque confession. Quand le calvinisme a pénétré en Angleterre, spécialement pendant le règne d'Élisabeth I, les pratiquants appelés « puritains » ont été obligés d'accepter *Common Prayer Book* et d'observer le rite dans le cadre de l'Église Anglicane. À l'époque des premiers rois Stuart, une partie d'entre les puritains ont refusé de respecter le rite anglicane, en devenant sectaires et « congrégationalistes ». Leur radicalisme était justifié par l'introduction de l'arminianisme au sein de l'Église Anglicane, une doctrine qui « reconnaît à nouveau la légitimité des évêques et de certains rites catholiques; l'on craint une évolution ultérieure vers un 'anglo-catholicisme' » (Nemo 2002, 256). En même temps, les calvinistes qui acceptent l'Église (les presbytériens) ont critiqué l'érastianisme, une doctrine qui remonte à l'époque élisabéthaine et dont la formulation systématique a été faite par Richard Hooker, dans son fameux écrit *Of the lawes of ecclesiasticall politie* (1593–1662). L'érastianisme soutenait la compétence exclusive du prince en matière de politique religieuse. Le nom d'« érastianisme » provient du théologien suisse Thomas Erastus, un adepte de Zwingli, qui a affirmé (seulement) que l'État a le droit de punir tant les crimes civiles que ceux religieux. Dans le contexte de l'anglicanisme, cet aspect est devenu une marque distinctive de la souveraineté anglaise. Par conséquent, à partir de ce moment, il faut distinguer dans le clergé anglais trois

partis : un parti de *Haute Église*, le moins éloigné de l'Église Romane et qui accepte le rituel imposé par les rois Tudors ; un parti presbytérien, non conformiste, qui reste dans l'Église, mais en souhaitant la reformer ; et un groupe indépendant ou « congrégationaliste », qui condamne à la fois l'épiscopat anglican et le synode presbytérien (Maurois 1937, 395). La politique menée par les premiers rois Stuart n'a été pas du tout capable d'offrir des garanties que l'Angleterre ne reviendrait pas catholique : l'anglicanisme ressemblait de plus en plus à un catholicisme déguisé, les rois Stuart avaient adopté la doctrine de la monarchie de droit divin et, de plus, ils menaient une politique externe favorable à l'Espagne catholique et hostile aux Pays-Bas protestants. « Dès 1604, celui-ci [Jacques I] dut faire expulser de l'Église trois cents pasteurs puritains qui refusaient d'observer le rituel anglican », relate Maurois (1937, 394-395). De même, Jacques entra en conflit avec le parlement puritain à cause de sa tentative d'imposer la doctrine absolutiste de la monarchie de droit divin. Charles I est « moins original. Il est absolutiste parce que les rois le sont à son époque », mais sous son règne, l'Église est devenue arminienne. Pendant cette époque on a déployé une dure répression des puritains, orchestrée par l'Église Anglicane avec, en tête, l'archevêque William Laud, figure proéminente de l'arminianisme. Le moment culminant a été représenté par la tentative d'imposer aux Écossais presbytériens le rituel anglican, ce qui a déterminé une forte résistance de la part des presbytériens écossais et une radicalisation de la résistance des puritains anglais. Charles a essayé, en 1639, de vaincre la résistance des Écossais par la force armée, sans convoquer le Parlement, cela étant la première fois, après 1323, quand un monarque anglais n'a pas convoqué le Parlement en temps de guerre (Maurois 1937).

Après l'exécution du roi, Oliver Cromwell a pris le pouvoir, en dissolvant de force le Long Parlement et en formant un Parlement nouveau qu'il contrôlait en tant que Lord Protecteur. Les prérogatives accordées au Lord Protecteur surclassaient celles des monarques absolutistes sur le continent. Cromwell s'en est servi pour réprimer tout mouvement de protestation. Afin de gagner sur l'opposition il a transformé le Protectorat en une dictature militaire puritaine. Son autorité a

été acceptée surtout après les deux guerres conduisant à l'unification de la Grande Bretagne : une contre l'Ireland afin de rétablir l'ordre (protestant) par massacrer les catholiques, l'autre contre l'Écosse, pour punir le couronnement de Charles II roi de l'Écosse.

La monarchie a été restaurée en 1660 par l'avènement au trône de Charles II Stuart. Fils d'une mère française et catholique, réfugié en France après avoir quitté l'Écosse envahie par Cromwell, il était un sympathisant du catholicisme, auquel il n'a pas officiellement adhéré. Pendant son règne, il a essayé de maintenir un équilibre entre les divers religions et groupes politiques, mais il a fermement impose le culte anglican, en nourrissant l'espoir de réintroduire le catholicisme en Angleterre. Par nommer comme ministre Edward Hyde, lord Clarendon, il s'est débarrassé avec intelligence de l'armée républicaine en ne punissant que les coupables pour génocide. Clarendon a imposé un code de principes qui « rendit en Angleterre le presbytérianisme à peut près impossible ; [mais] les sectes, moins organisées, survécurent » (Maurois 1937, 474).

### 3. L'érastianisme de Hobbes

Selon Hobbes, la monarchie est la seule forme de gouvernement qui garantit l'interprétation unitaire de la loi naturelle. En revanche, le parlement serait divisé quant à l'interprétation, à cause de la diversité des opinions. Hobbes a également exclu la possibilité qu'une autorité humaine, comme par exemple l'Église, puisse juger les actes du souverain au nom de Dieu. À la conclusion du contrat, le souverain a aussi reçu « le droit de déterminer la manière en laquelle il faut honorer Dieu» (Hobbes 2013 [1649], XV, § 17), il a donc une autorité absolue, sans être responsable ni envers le peuple, ni envers ceux-là qui se considèrent eux-mêmes les représentants de Dieu sur la terre. Hobbes a ainsi voulu protéger les décisions du souverain contre la contestation venue de la part d'une autorité concurrente. Dans la dispute autour de la relation État-Église, Hobbes se situe donc du côté de l'anglicanisme, en rejetant à la fois le catholicisme et le calvinisme presbytérien ou puritain. L'anglicanisme est la seule confession qui admet la souveraineté indivisée et qui respecte l'essence de la religion publique. Aussi, dans le chapitre

XLII du *Léviathan*, Hobbes refuse-t-il la doctrine puritaine conformément à laquelle ce que l'homme fait contre sa conscience est un péché, en argumentant que cela pourrait être vrai dans l'ordre naturel, mais non dans l'état civil où le jugement individuel doit se soumettre à la « conscience publique » qu'est la loi. Malgré tout cela, *Leviathan* a été en égale mesure attaqué par les anglicans et les puritains, la raison étant que Hobbes a désapprouvé la doctrine protestante conformément à laquelle le Pape est l'Antichrist ; au contraire, il a affirmé que le Pape remplit un service légitime, par la délégation du service par les souverains qui le reconnaissent. Cette théorie a mis en colère tout le monde, y compris les catholiques, et on l'a qualifiée d'« athéisme ». En même temps, il est allé si loin dans l'affirmation de l'autorité royale que les clercs anglicans voyaient cela comme un danger. Hobbes contestait la révélation des évêques en les transformant en de simples serviteurs de la religion publique, et cela les rendait vulnérables aux arguments des puritains indépendants qui n'admettaient pas l'épiscopat. Mais Hobbes visait également les puritains, en affirmant que c'est de la part de l'autorité civile que les pasteurs reçoivent leur pouvoir sur les autres, et que seul le roi reçoit directement de Dieu son autorité spirituelle. « La thèse conformément à laquelle l'autorité des évêques et des autres clercs provient du souverain a comme corolaire la thèse affirmant que ce qu'un clerc peut faire, le souverain peut le faire lui aussi » (Sommerville 2007, 367, traduit par nous E.C.). La contestation de l'indépendance religieuse du clergé va, chez Hobbes, jusqu'au contrôle de l'interprétation de la Bible par l'autorité civile. Le matérialisme, le contractualisme et l'anticléricalisme ont apporté à Hobbes nombre de sévères critiques, tant de la part des royalistes et des anglicans (à noter ici les critiques formulées par Filmer et par l'évêque Bramhall), que de la part des parlementaires et des puritains (surtout les républicains radicaux tels Harrington et Lawson). Pour les premiers, *Léviathan* était un « catéchisme du rebelle », et pour les derniers un « abécédaire de l'absolutisme » (Parkin 2007, 202, traduit par nous E.C.).

Cet épisode n'a été point favorable à la réception de la doctrine contractualiste de Hobbes, bien que Hobbes ait soutenu l'absolutisme. La théorie du droit naturel était déjà utilisée par

les radicalistes parlementaires, et l'on pouvait considérer l'impeccable logique de Hobbes comme un « catéchisme du rebelle ». Cette expression a été utilisée par l'évêque John Bramhall dans son ouvrage *The serpent-salve* (1643) dans lequel il avait combattu l'écrit de Henry Parker *Observations upon some of His Majesties late answers* (1642).[3] Parker avait utilisait l'argument du droit naturel et soutenu que le peuple est la source du pouvoir, ayant donc le droit de choisir la forme du gouvernement. Dans *De cive* (1642), Hobbes avait utilisé l'argument du contrat pour soutenir le contraire. Pendant l'exil parisien, Bramhall a rencontré Hobbes et a engagé une dispute philosophique contre celui-ci au sujet de la liberté et de la nécessité, dispute commandée par les chefs du parti royaliste de l'exil. À cette occasion, Bramhall a attaqué l'ouvrage de Hobbes, *De cive* (1642), à partir de certains aspects théologiques révélateurs pour la question de la liberté et de la nécessité. Mais, dans peu de temps, Bramhall a également approché la question politique, car sa théorie scolastique sur la justice divine (Dieu est omnipotent, mais il se limite Lui-même en conformité avec les règles de la justice) avait pour conséquence la théorie politique de la souveraineté autolimitée. Cette théorie de la souveraineté autolimitée était soutenue aussi par le parti royaliste, conduit par Edward Hyde (prochain lord Clarendon, sous Charles II). Conformément à cette théorie, la souveraineté pourrait être absolue, mais le roi est obligé, dans sa conscience, tant par le serment fait que par sa fonction à observer les anciennes libertés et les droits accordés par les parchemins, et cette obligation n'est qu'une partie de l'obligation envers la loi et devant Dieu. Par conséquent, la théorie absolutiste de Hobbes est devenue indésirable pour les monarchistes. D'une part, elle ne correspondait pas à la stratégie des royalistes de conclure un accord avec le Parlement pour retourner en Angleterre. D'autre part, la théorie de Hobbes avait un caractère subversif relativement à la forme de légitimation de la monarchie et au rapport entre l'État et l'Église. Dans la vision de Bramhall, « l'erreur majeure de Hobbes consiste dans la thèse que le pouvoir réglemente la justice, mais, en réalité, c'est la justice qui réglemente le pouvoir. Cette thèse était importante pour contrecarrer la politique de Hobbes, et on va la développer sans

cesse comme réponse contre le volontarisme radical de Hobbes. […] En transformant la justice en une conséquence du pouvoir, Hobbes semblait transposer la relation divine de tout contenu substantiel en termes de bien essentiel et de mal essentiel. C'est de là que semblaient résulter l'arbitraire et le monde désenchanté du pouvoir politique hobbesien et du relativisme moral » (Parkin 2002, 48, traduit par nous E.C. ). La réplique donnée par Hobbes aux critiques de Bramhall sera incluse dans *Léviathan* (1651), mais la réception du livre sera fort influencée par le courant d'opinion défavorable créé par les royalistes mêmes.

En 1652 Filmer a fait publier en anonyme *Observations concerning the Orginall of Government,* écrit dans lequel il a attaqué les théories contractualistes de Grotius, Milton et Hobbes. Filmer poursuivait dans ces *Observations* deux objectifs. D'une part, il montrait que toute doctrine du contrat et du droit naturel est une fiction, car l'humanité a depuis toujours pris naissance de la soumission familiale, en identifiant l'autorité paternelle à la source unique de l'autorité royale, par le commandement divin. D'autre part, il affirmait que les partisans du républicanisme tentent en vain d'exploiter l'ouvrage de Hobbes à leur propre intérêt, car Hobbes soutient la souveraineté indivisée et la monarchie. La contribution de Filmer à la réception du livre de Hobbes s'est avérée décisive à cause du premier argument, car celui-ci a orienté tant l'attitude négative des royalistes que la curiosité des républicains. Ce que Filmer et les royalistes considéraient comme subversif chez Hobbes c'était principalement l'idée que la loi première de la nature est l'autoconservation, d'où il résulte qu'il faut reconnaître le droit de résister face à la mort même au criminel justement puni. Bons rhétoriciens, les royalistes connaissaient la force de conviction des exemples, et c'étaient justement les exemples donnés par Hobbes dans *Léviathan*, dans le chapitre XXI surtout, qui constituaient des « ingrédients essentiels pour reconnaître dans Hobbes un théoricien de la résistance » (*ibidem*). En effet, bien que nombre de clercs et de savants presbytériens aient attaqué avec véhémence l'œuvre de Hobbes (Richard Baxter, Alexander Ross, John Wallis) en demandant qu'on le condamne comme étant « papiste » ou « athéiste »,

Hobbes a gagné la sympathie de certains républicains et presbytériens. En 1654 il a publié le traité *Of Liberty and Necessity* comme réponse à l'attitude de Bramhall, où il a inclus une « épître au 'lecteur sobre et discret', extrêmement anticléricale » (Jackson 2007, 194; traduit par nous E.C.). Celle-ci lui a fait gagner assez de sympathisants au rang des puritains. Et c'était une raison encore plus sérieuse pour Bramhall et pour les royalistes de prendre leur distance par rapport à Hobbes. « Hobbes représentait une menace terrible pour le maintien de l'unité entre Charles II et l'anglicanisme laudien (bramhallien) » (Jackson 2007, 196, traduit par nous E.C.). En 1655, Bramhall, encore en exil, a y répliqué par son traité *A Defence of True Liberty from Antecedent and Extrinsical Necessity*, dans la dédicace duquel il se présentait lui-même comme défenseur de la cause « de Dieu et de l'homme, de la religion et de la politique, de l'Église et de l'État » (Jackson 2007, 197, traduit par nous E.C.). La doctrine de Hobbes était ainsi étiquetée comme « destructive de toutes les relations humaines, entre le prince et le sujet, le père et le fils, le maître et le serviteur, l'homme et la femme. Quiconque soutiendrait de tels principes vaudrait mieux vivre parmi les bêtes que au sein d'une communauté chrétienne et civilisée » (Jackson 2007, 198, traduit par nous E.C.). Enfin, Hobbes a publié, en 1656, *The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance* où il exposait de manière plus systématique ses objections contre l'autorité des évêques, en considérant que c'était aussi la principale raison des attaques royalistes et patriarchalistes dirigées contre lui. Il précisait le fait que c'était l'autorité humaine des serviteurs de l'Église qu'il contestait, mais non la lettre des Écritures. De plus, il apportait un argument *ad hominem* contre Bramhall qui avait obtenu son rang d'évêque en servant non Dieu, mais au parti royaliste dont il avait été d'emblée l'agent. Par cela Hobbes illustrait la manière dont la hiérarchie ecclésiastique anglicane justifiait par *jure divino* une autorité qui n'était que civile et laïque. De plus, il attaquait l'arminianisme auquel Bramhall avait adhéré et qu'il considérait comme responsable de la guerre civile.

En 1658, Bramhall a publié *The Catching of Leviathan*, écrit qui a décisivement influencé l'attitude envers Hobbes, tout au long de la Restauration. Hobbes était ici accusé d'athéisme et

de l'hérésie appelée érastianisme. Bramhall s'est à son tour servi d'un argument *ad hominem*, en affirmant que le retour de Hobbes dans l'Angleterre cromwellienne (Bramhall était encore en exil) démontrait par lui-même l'esprit subversif et révolutionnaire de sa philosophie. La théorie de Hobbes sur la souveraineté par conquête suggérait qu'il est souverain celui qui détient la souveraineté *de facto*, et cela représentait le problème le plus grave pour la revendication de la souveraineté par le parti royaliste. Par conséquent, Hobbes a été considéré par les royalistes un agent de la révolte et un partisan de Cromwell[4].

Au pôle opposé, les activistes républicains James Harrington et George Lawson associaient eux aussi l'absolutisme de *Léviathan* au Protectorat cromwellien et décrivaient Hobbes comme un absolutiste inacceptable. Peu après, le terme *hobbisme* allait désigner, tant pour les royalistes anglicans que pour les républicains puritains, toute doctrine inconvenante au plan politique et religieux. Après la restauration de la monarchie et l'adoption du code de Clarendon, les conflits idéologiques entre les deux partis ont cessé d'être directs. Par conséquent, jusqu'à la crise de l'Exclusion et la consolidation des idéologies tory et whig, chacune des parties combattait le « hobbisme », terme par lequel était désigné *l'Autre*.

## 4. Le hobbisme de Locke

Un aspect important afin de comprendre le contexte intellectuel dans lequel Locke s'est formé est lié à la constitution de Royal Society et à l'importance gagnée par les sciences naturelles dans la cristallisation d'une vision sur le monde et sur la société. Hobbes n'avait pas été admis dans les cercles de cette société pour des raisons idéologiques et politiques, et non pour des raisons purement scientifiques. Il est vrai qu'il n'était pas l'adepte de la méthode expérimentale pratiquée par les membres de la Société Royale, fait prouvé par sa dispute avec Robert Boyle, au sujet de la pompe d'air. Néanmoins, son influence était immense au sein d'une génération de savants qui s'inspiraient de ses écrits sans le reconnaître ouvertement[5]. Son influence était d'autant plus grande sur ceux-là qui voulaient fonder la philosophie sociale sur la philosophie naturelle, et non sur des dogmes théologiques. La philosophie naturelle de Hobbes offrait

un modèle pour repenser la relation entre connaître la nature et connaître la société. C'est dans ce contexte intellectuel marqué par l'importance de la philosophie de Hobbes et par l'effort de combattre les hérésies de celui-ci que John Locke a écrit les deux *Tracts sur le gouvernement*[6]*,* restés non-publiés.

Ce qui a déterminé Locke de rédiger les deux traités a été la position publique adoptée par un groupe de Oxford, à propos de la liberté de la conscience. Ce groupe était dirigé par John Owen, un fameux théologien puritain et un intime de Cromwell ; en faisaient également partie Henry Stubble et Edward Bagshaw, deux admirateurs et défenseurs publics de la philosophie de Hobbes. Dans ce milieu, Locke s'est senti encouragé à approfondir la théorie de Hobbes, mais sans trop de zèle. Il faut également remarquer que, sans ce même milieu de Oxford, déroulait son activité le mathématicien et le théologien puritain John Wallis, qui était l'un des principaux critiques de Hobbes et qui allait devenir, tout comme Locke, un intime du comte de Shaftesbury[7]. Le problème que préoccupait les hobbistes de Oxford et à la fois Locke était si le magistrat civil est intitulé à réglementer les questions indifférentes relatives à la pratique religieuse (Locke 1997a, 10). Pour Owen, tout comme pour les puritains indépendants et congrégationalistes, c'était une question liée à la conscience ; ils disaient qu'il faudrait respecter les décisions des individus si elles ne représentent pas une menace pour le bien public, en se servant dans leur argumentation de l'idée du droit naturel. L'opinion de Locke était différente. Dans le *Premier tract* il argumentait, contre Edward Bagshaw, l'auteur du traité *The Great Question Concerning Things Indifferent in religious Worship* (1660), que, à cause du danger de nuire à l'ordre public, il était nécessaire que les questions indifférentes (*adiaphora*) soient déterminées par le magistrat civil. « Mais pour que la vérité soit évidente, il faut analyser le sujet un peu plus en profondeur. Il faut investiguer les sources du pouvoir civil et dévoiler les véritables fondements de l'autorité », notait Locke (1997, 69, traduit par nous E.C.) dans le *Second tract*.

Locke mentionnait qu'il y a deux modalités de concevoir le fondement du pouvoir civil : certains considèrent que les hommes sont nés esclaves, d'autres qu'ils sont nés libres. Les premiers

affirment qu'il y a un droit paternel sur les enfants et ils prétendent que c'est dans ce droit que réside l'origine du gouvernement. Conformément à cette conception, le magistrat reçoit son autorité par naissance et par institution divine, en vertu de son caractère et de sa nature, étant par conséquent le seul capable à détenir le pouvoir. Il peut donc décider arbitrairement sur les choses que Dieu n'a pas interdit explicitement, dans le messages des *Saintes Écritures.* On présuppose que Dieu a accordé au magistrat seulement la liberté de décider dans cette question, et que celui-ci n'est pas limité par nul accord ou contrat avec les sujets. Les derniers affirment, au contraire, que les hommes naissent égaux et « alors il est évident qu'aucune union ne pourrait apparaître entre les hommes, aucun style de vie commun ne serait-il possible, ni une loi, ni une constitution par laquelle les gens puissent se réunir, comme il conviendrait, dans un corps unique, que s'ils renoncent à leur liberté naturelle, en la transférant à un autre, à un prince ou à un sénat [...] où réside nécessairement le pouvoir suprême » (Locke 1997b, 70). Ce pouvoir, dit encore Locke, n'est sur terre en rien limité et on ne peut le constituer que si chaque individu rend toute sa liberté naturelle entre les mains du législateur qui, ainsi, concentre en sa personne l'autorité et le droit naturel de tout individu. Il va sans dire que Locke parle ici de la théorie de Hobbes, car « toutes les questions indifférents, sacrées aussi bien que profanes, sont entièrement soumises au pouvoir législatif et au gouvernement » (*ibidem*). Il existe également une troisième possibilité de constituer le pouvoir civil, quand « on présuppose que toute l'autorité provient de Dieu, mais l'on considère que la désignation et la nomination de la personne qui détient ce pouvoir revient aux hommes » (*ibidem*). Cette troisième modalité n'est pas détaillée et il ne résulte pas clairement par quoi exactement elle est différente par rapport à celle de Hobbes. On pourrait supposer que Locke interprète la doctrine de Hobbes comme étant *athéiste*, dans le sens que la source du pouvoir absolu est indifférent par rapport à Dieu, n'étant dérivée que de la loi naturelle dont la relation avec Lui reste indéterminée. C'était l'interprétation qu'on donnait à Hobbes dans les débats publics où l'on accusait le philosophe d'érastianisme. La troisième possibilité, mentionnée par Locke, correspondrait aux

théories contractualistes puritaines qui limitaient l'autorité par le droit naturel. Mais Locke n'offre pas de pareils détails. Il affirme seulement que celles-ci admettent à la fois l'origine divine et la limitation du pouvoir, car « du droit paternel il ne résulte pas aisément le droit de gouverner, tout comme le droit de vie et de mort ne résulte-t-il du droit populaire » (Locke 1997b, 71). De même, Locke ne décide pas laquelle des trois théories est vraie, car cela n'est pas pertinent pour le thème discuté. Il souligne que toutes ont en commun l'idée que Dieu a voulu qu'il existe un ordre civil, et que dans tout ordre civil il faut qu'il y ait un pouvoir suprême, le pouvoir de faire des lois et de les appliquer.

Malgré cette précaution, Locke n'aurait pas pu, à l'époque, se soustraire à l'accusation de hobbisme, pour ce qu'il affirmait dans les lignes suivantes. Si les *Deux tracts* avaient été publiés, Locke aurait dû répondre à l'objection des anglicans que seulement à l'aide de la logique du *Léviathan* il était possible d'obtenir une perspective neutre sur le papisme, sur l'hérésie (l'érastianisme hobbesien) ou sur la dissidence (puritaine). On disait à propos de la théorie de Hobbes qu'elle était contradictoire, alors on pouvait utiliser la logique même de Hobbes pour analyser de manière critique la doctrine de Hobbes (l'érastianisme). C'est en cela que consistait l'illusion du hobbisme, dont Locke n'est pas totalement étranger. Il affirme que, comme il résulte de toutes les trois doctrines, le magistrat civil possède l'autorité sur les questions indifférentes par rapport à la religion : « si la religion n'existait pas, toutes les questions indifférente seraient dans le pouvoir du magistrat » (Locke 1997b, 71). Mais, continue-t-il, notre religion est le christianisme, et il ne résulte pas de la religion chrétienne qu'une partie des questions indifférentes dépasseraient le pouvoir du magistrat, « par conséquent le pouvoir sur toutes les questions indifférentes a la même étendue que dans l'absence de toute religion, car on nie l'autorité du magistrat à propos de beaucoup de questions indifférentes seulement sous le prétexte d'une loi chrétienne de ce genre » » (Locke 1997b, 71). Ce paragraphe aurait été, lui seul, suffisant pour qu'on le suspecte de hobbisme. Car, pour les contemporains de Hobbes, présupposer qu'« il n'existerait pas aucune religion » équivalait à la présupposition que Dieu

n'existe pas ou, au mieux, qu'il existerait un Dieu créateur du monde qui n'interviendrait plus dans la création et ne se révélerait plus aux hommes.

Mais Locke va même encore plus loin à appliquer les concepts hobbesiens. Étant puritain, il admet que certaines actions dirigées contre la liberté de conscience sont illégitimes, comme par exemple quand le magistrat affirme qu'elle est fausse la liberté de conscience de ceux qui « se retirent en eux-mêmes et cherchent un abri là où ils peuvent se cacher en toute sureté, aux profonds de leur propre conscience, que les lois et les cérémonies de l'église ne peuvent profaner d'aucune façon » » (Locke 1997b, 75). Cette liberté de conscience est divine et sous la juridiction de Dieu, et si le magistrat la déclare comme fausse pour des raisons politiques, alors il fait une injure à la majesté divine. Mais il existe également la situation inverse, quand un homme invoque la liberté de conscience pour justifier son insoumission envers une loi l'offensant, bien qu'elle ne vise que « la paix publique et la prospérité du peuple ». Dans ce cas, l'opinion privée et les scrupules du subordonné ne peuvent pas annuler la légitimité du supérieur, et la loi n'est pas injuste seulement parce que quelqu'un la considère ainsi.

Afin d'élucider cette question, Locke fait la distinction entre l'obligation matérielle et l'obligation formelle. La distinction de Locke correspond à la distinction que Hobbes avait fait entre l'obligation *in foro interno* et l'obligation *in foro externo*: les lois naturelles, affirmait Hobbes, obligent *in foro interno*, relativement à un désir qui se veut accomplir, mais non [toujours] *in foro externo* aussi, en ce qui concerne l'action. Souvent, l'on peut transgresser l'obligation *in foro interno* afin de respecter une obligation d'ordre supérieur dérivant de la loi positive et qui oblige *in foro externo* (Hobbes, *Léviathan*, XV, 105). « À certaines occasions, il présente la différence entre l'obligation *in foro interno* et l'obligation *in foro externo* en termes de différence entre 'une disposition de l'esprit' relative à la loi (ou la vertu et le vice) d'une part, et l'action spécifique en en accord ou en opposition à la loi, d'autre part » (Warrender 1957, 54, traduit par nous E.C.). Pour Locke, l'obligation est « matérielle » dans le cas où la chose même visée par la loi humaine oblige la conscience. Une pareille obligation est

nécessaire en vertu de la loi, même avant qu'une loi humaine existe. L'obligation est formelle quand une question indifférente est imposée aux hommes par le pouvoir légitime des magistrats. D'où il résulte que la liberté est elle aussi de deux types : une liberté de la raison et une liberté de la volonté. La première existe quand on ne demande pas la confirmation de la raison pour établir si une chose ou une autre est nécessaire dans notre nature, « et c'est en cela que consiste la liberté entière de la conscience » » (Locke 1997b, 75). La deuxième se manifeste lorsqu'on n'exige pas le consentement de la volonté pour réaliser une action ou une autre, et on peut ne pas la respecter sans par cela violer la liberté de conscience ». Il en résulte que le magistrat peut imposer légitimement 1) des obligations à la fois formelles et matérielles, comme par exemple quand la chose imposée est demandée à la fois par la loi humaine et par la loi divine, ou 2) des obligations purement formelles, comme par exemple dans le cas où le magistrat impose des choses différentes par rapport à la loi divine en ne limitant que la liberté de volonté. Lorsque le magistrat impose 3) des obligations matérielles qui ne précèdent pas à la loi humaine, en forçant la liberté de conscience comme si ces obligations-là étaient éternelles, il agit injustement.

Ainsi, Locke révise la position du hobbiste Edward Bagshaw et rejette les arguments des puritains indépendants qui invoquaient la liberté de conscience en des questions ne concernant que la liberté de la volonté. On a affirmé que cela signifiait assumer une « position qui reste à l'ombre de la compréhension profondément érastienne du contrôle par le magistrat des caractéristiques extérieures de l'église » (Parkin 2002, 210).

## 5. Conclusion

A l'époque où Locke rédigeait ses *petits traités* sur le gouvernement, la théorie de Hobbes était en Angleterre la seule théorie solide du droit naturel. La version du droit naturel proposée par Hugo Grotius n'est devenue influente en Angleterre qu'en 1660, lorsque Robert Sharrock, un ami de Robert Boyle, a publié à Oxford *Hypothesis ethike*, *De officiis secundum naturae jus*. Sharrock a reformulé la théorie du droit

naturel de telle manière que l'hypothèse de la loi naturelle rende possible une morale dans laquelle l'action humaine puisse avoir comme résultat d'autres considérations que la peur de mort et le calcul utilitariste. Mais la théorie de Grotius sur la sociabilité ne donnait pas une explication convenable de l'obligation morale et, pour cette raison, Sharrock empruntait à Cicero l'idée que l'honnêteté se définit par ce qui est utile. La sociabilité, par exemple, serait à la fois ce qui est utile et ce qui est honnête (Parkin 2002, 2013). Le livre de Sharrock a permis de faire sortir la théorie du droit naturel de l'impasse dans lequel l'avait conduite la théorie de Hobbes et le hobbisme. Sharrock a eu sans doute une certaine influence sur Locke, dont les *Essais* de 1663 vont reprendre l'idée que la sociabilité constitue le trait principal de l'homme dans l'état de nature. Dans les huit *Essais* la question de la loi naturelle est traitée à partir de trois problèmes, à savoir l'existence de la loi naturelle (le Ier essai), la connaissance de cette loi (les essais II, III, IV, V) et la manière dont elle est source d'obligation (les essais VI, VII, VIII). L'influence de Sharock concerne surtout le rapport entre la loi naturelle et la société ; elle permet à Locke d'esquisser un premier dépassement du hobbisme par le présupposé que le principe de l'utilité doit être soumis au commandement de préserver non seulement sa vie, mais la vie de l'humanité entière. Ainsi la sociabilité est définie non par rapport aux mœurs conventionnelles qui sont la condition de la paix civile sous l'emprise du Léviathan, mais par rapport à la téléologie de l'espèce humaine dans son état naturel. Avant d'être citoyen d'un Etat et d'une société civile particulière, l'individu est « citoyen de l'humanité » (Polin 1960), selon la loi naturelle. Lorsque Locke développera ces idées plus tard, dans le *Deuxième traité*, il sera encore influencé par Sharrock, à travers les théories que *Hypothesis ethike* avait inspirées : celles de Richard Cumberland, de Samuel Parker, de Samuel Pufendorf et de James Tyrrell, l'ami whig de Locke.

Sur la base de la théorie politique développée dans le *Deuxième traité* de 1690, Locke donnera une toute autre interprétation du problème de la tolérance et du rapport entre Eglise et Etat, dans la *Lettre sur la tolérance* (1690). Mais, déjà dans son *Essai sur la tolérance* de 1667, Locke ne donnait plus

un crédit illimité à l'opinion du magistrat, bien qu'il lui ait reconnu le droit de réglementer sur les choses indifférentes, comme les cérémonies. « Cet essai marque un déplacement décisif de la position que Locke adoptait dans les *Deux tracts*, vers la perspective tolérationniste adoptée dans *Lettre sur la tolérance* » (Goldie 1997, 134). A cette époque Locke était dans le cercle de Shaftesbury dont la politique de limitation du pouvoir commençait à façonner la vision de Locke, surtout que les écrits de cette époque étaient faits pour servir dans les prises de position publiques de son patron. Ainsi, Locke pensait que le magistrat fait son devoir si les résolutions qu'il donne ont comme seul but la paix sociale. En revanche, si les actions publiques visent les questions qui touchent à la conviction, le magistrat a non seulement violé les règles de la justice, mais également commis une absurdité, car « le magistrat en tant que magistrat n'a rien à faire avec le bien des âmes des gens ou leurs concernements dans une autre vie » (Locke 1997c, 144). A l'âge de la maturité, le hobbisme sera complètement abandonné : dans la *Lettre sur la tolérance*, en guise de réponse à la révocation de l'Edit de Nantes et à l'impérialisme catholique de Louis XIV, Locke verra la question de la tolérance « de moins en moins comme un problème de politique d'Etat et de plus en plus comme un problème de droits de l'homme » (Dunn 2003, 15).

**NOTES**

[1] Les *Deux Tracts* ont été publiés pour la première fois par Philip Abrams, dans *Locke's Two Tracts on Government*, chez Cambridge University Press, en 1967. L'édition que nous utilisons et celle de Goldie (1997) qui ressemble plusieurs essais de Locke, classés en « majeurs » et « mineurs ». Parmi les essais majeurs en font partie *Essays on the Law of Nature*, pour lesquels nous utilisons l'édition standard de Wolfgang von Leyden, publiée en 1954 et reprise en (Locke) 1997.

[2] Une nouvelle édition, complète, a été démarrée par Clarendon Press en 1975. Elle n'est pas encore « complète ».

[3] L'écrit de Parker était une réponse à la *Réponse* par laquelle le roi Charles Ier avait réfuté les *Dix-neuf propositions* du Parlement. Parker répondait aussi à la position modérée soutenue par un groupe de parlementaires en tête avec Edward Hyde qui avait critiqué la position absolutiste du Parlement, en soutenant la doctrine de la monarchie mixte. Cette doctrine s'opposait à l'argument du contrat, en le remplaçant par la thèse de l'autolimitation du pouvoir, basée sur l'argument

historique. Il convient de signaler que le sens historique de Clarendon (Edward Hyde) sera le point de départ de la controverse des historiens (*tory* versus *whig*) quant à la Guerre civile dont Clarendon sera le premier historien.

[4] « Il rend le pouvoir des rois tellement exorbitant, qu'aucun sujet doué de conscience ou de discrétion n'a pas pu ou ne peut pas l'endurer ; il fait donc que la monarchie soit odieuse pour l'humanité. » (Parkin 2002, 194, traduit par nous).

[5] « À Cambridge, le jeune Isaac Newton lisait *De Corpore* au milieu des années 1660. En 1669 le mathématicien William Neile a présenté à la Société Royale une théorie causale du mouvement, en se servant d'idée que, écrivait-il, 'Je reconnais de plein cœur les avoir pris dans les livres de Monsieur Hobbes'. D'autres ont été bien plus circonspects quand à l'utilisation des idées de Hobbes, après avoir eux-mêmes contribué [antérieurement] de façon publique à la critique contre Hobbes. Le collègue de Newton de Trinity, le mathématicien Isaac Barrow, avait été ouvertement hostile à la position politique et théologique de Hobbes, mais dans ses *Lectiones opticae* de 1668 il a proposé une description de la réfraction provenant d'une théorie mécanique du mouvement limité. Il a évité de mentionner que la théorie, complétée par les diagrammes en annexe (bien que renversés et un peu modifiés) étaient copiés directement de *Tractatus Opticus* de Hobbes » (Parkin 2002, 222, traduit par nous E.C.).

[6] A ne pas confondre *Two Tracts on Government*, écrits en 1660 et 1662, avec *Two Treatises of Government*, publiés en 1690.

[7] Voir Woolhouse (2009, 170).

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# Book Reviews

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# New Interdisciplinary Advances in the Field of Legal Translation: A Review of *The Ashgate Handbook of Legal Translation*

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CHENG, LE; SIN, KING KUI, and WAGNER, ANNE, eds. (2014): *The Ashgate Handbook of Legal Translation*. Surrey/Burlington: Ashgate, 325 p.

**Keywords**: legal translation, theory and practice, language, law, communication, translatability

In addition to a firm grasp of its linguistic complexities, successful legal translation requires an in-depth knowledge of cultures and legal systems. Legal terminology is system-bound because it is rooted in the forms and histories of language, and translations inevitably are conditioned by a manifold otherness. This is one reason why legal translation is so challenging and why the issue of translatability lies at the core of legal translation studies which investigate the historical, cultural, and societal dimensions of the translation process. *The Ashgate Handbook of Legal Translation* is a comprehensive collection of the most up-to-date research in this field. With rigorous structure and well-reasoned argumentation, it explores a wide range of topics including legal terminology, lexicography, phraseology, and cultural studies. Its scope extends from the careful examination of specific legal terms to the theoretical and practical development of whole legal systems.

Editors Anne Wagner, King Kui Sin and Le Cheng open the discussion with an introduction to legal translatability as a

"third space" (p. 1), connecting the source space and the target space. In positing this "third space" as a concept for translators, this volume seeks to shed insights on the latest development of legal translation and "offer broader and worldwide perspectives for understanding the roles of translatability and the third space in the debate of legal translation" (p. 2). The volume is divided into two parts: Part I, "Legal Translation in Theory" and Part II, "Legal Translation in Practice". Part I (Chapters 1-8) expounds on fundamental issues in legal translation such as equivalence, the use of plain language, cultural transfer, the relationship between judicial interpretation and legal translation, and the training of translators. Part II (Chapters 9-17) explores the current translation practices in different legal jurisdictions around the world, including the European Union, China, Russia and Japan.

In Chapter 1, Mariusz Jerzy Golecki presents a theoretical approach to the study of legal translation and economics which holds that although law and economics are autonomous disciplines, they nevertheless are closely connected through an intersystemic interface of social interactions. This chapter makes a distinction between philosophy discourse and science discourse, positioning legal discourse somewhere in between those two. His methodology, called "decoding", involves the analysis of legal systems based on classical assumptions of the Chicago school of economics, and assumes that legal discourse participates in the interrelated narratives and conceptual models of philosophy, science, and economics.

In Chapter 2, the editors discuss the subject of cultural transfer in legal translation as it applies to the institution of marriage in European jurisprudence. While the laws of a specific culture shape social forms such as marriage, these forms also are influenced by life, morality, and politics as well as by socio-historical dynamics and philosophical trends. Such complexity often results in a dualistic perception of legal institutions: "In European jurisprudence, there is a concern with the relationship between the inside and outside of the law" (p. 29). By analyzing these and other factors related to cultural transfer in legal discourse, the authors develop a set of criteria that can be useful in guiding the process.

Chapter 3 addresses the challenges to legal translation posed by the incommensurability of diverse languages and legal systems. Author Janet Ainsworth holds that a culture's legal system and terminology are products of its specific cultural and historical context (p. 45), and advocates the use of plain language translation to address the resulting problem of ambiguity in legal discourse. More specifically, Ainsworth proposes two approaches to resolving ambiguities in legal texts of the European Union, purposive translation and interpretive translation. She also touches upon the subject of Chinese contract law to argue that improved translation strategies can accelerate a country's process of legal transfer and acculturation in conjunction with efforts towards globalization.

In Chapter 4, author Janny H. C. Leung analyzes the complex relation between equivalence in legal translation and the concept of legal fiction. Problems of equivalence between a source language and target language almost always exist in legal translation, partly due to the fact that language itself is inherently indeterminate. The legal fiction can be understood as purposeful make-believe, consisting of explicit or implied statements that are not literally true (p. 58). This approach subtlety resonates to the very nature of a sign that connects a sense and a sound-image by a sign user. Leung maps the relations between equivalence in legal translation and legal fiction, providing in-depth insights for legal translation and translation theories.

Víctor González-Ruiz argues in Chapter 5 for a comprehensive plain-language approach to legal translation. He discusses in particular the communicative challenges of translating legal texts between English and Spanish, and suggests that not only should plain-language drafting of source texts be considered a requirement, but that the functional equivalence of these texts should be enhanced through a plain-language approach to translation. In addition, the author provides a detailed statistical analysis which validates the proposed approach (p. 86). This chapter suggests that plain language techniques could benefit communication in translation and extends the concept of functional equivalence approach in legal translation.

In Chapter 6, Svetlana V. Vlasenko seeks to improve the overall quality of legal translation products by addressing the potential benefits of a process strategy called "units of legal translation," or ULTs (p. 92) based on minimal units of thought. While a ULT is a self-referential cognitive unit in the source translator's psyche, the translator also must reference knowledge which exists in the world beyond his or her psyche — in particular, the semiotic signs and patterns of meaning in the target language. Illustrating the referential portrayal of legal concepts (p. 103-108), and investigating the characters and clustering source language signifiers for referential portraying of the signified (p. 108-112), Vlasenko provides English- and Russian-language examples to support this approach.

In Chapter 7, Fernando Prieto Ramos introduces a methodology for solving legal translation problems related to lexicography and to institutional terminology management. Due to the asymmetry of different legal systems, translators face daunting challenges in the construction of referential frameworks of meaning in legal texts. Moreover, it is common that legal terms are not adequately understood until they actually undergo the process of translation. The author therefore proposes a translation strategy based on an objective determination of adequacy, and suggests an integrative model that takes into account both the communicative situation and the legal macro-contextualization of the translation process. Ramos furthers suggests that such an integrative approach to terminology management can better position legal texts for transfer between cultures, legal systems, and organizations.

Chapter 8, contributed by Catherine Way, presents a conceptual framework for the training of competent legal translators, for establishing training objectives, and for decision-making in the translation classroom. Designed especially for the early stages of translator training, Way's framework proposes a sequencing pattern based on increasing degrees of difficulty in the development of translator subcompetences (p. 148). This sequencing pattern proposes six areas of focus for strengthening specific subcompetences: training guidance, knowledge of legal systems, legal

terminology, legal translation theory, translation practices, and revision strategies. The framework also can be tailored to account for differences in respective translation portfolios.

In Chapter 9, which begins Part II of the volume, Colin Robertson analyzes the drafting, revision, and translation of European Union (EU) legislative texts with the goal of providing practical guidance to the diverse field of professionals who perform these challenging tasks. Although legislative language was in EU derived originally from notably French (p. 161), hybrid legal terminology has evolved through the process of creating multiple-language versions. In Robertson's view, teamwork is the key to achieving the proper communicative alignment, monosemy, and consistency across versions.

In Chapter 10, Łucja Biel presents a conceptual framework for legal translation which emphasizes the role of phraseology. The author compares features of the legal phraseology of the Polish JRC Acquis Corpus of translated EU law to those of the Polish corpus of non-translated legislation (p. 184). Biel's study empirically analyzes collocations of editing units in terms of intratextuality, hypertextuality, authority, and conflict avoidance in order to show that unless translators consciously work to overcome communicative interference, the referencing patterns in their legal translations are significantly more varied and tend to be mere reflections of source-language patterns (p. 190) due to multilingual constraints, conceptual inadequacies, and to asymmetries between languages and legal systems.

In Chapter 11, Mauricio Gotti investigates the introduction of the *UNCITRAL Model Law* into the Italian legal system in order to better understand the process by which internationally recognized laws are transferred to a specific target language and culture. His research is based a comparative analysis of the Modal Law on International Commercial Arbitration and the arbitration laws extant in the Italian Code of Civil Procedure. Gotti's detailed analysis addresses topical, linguistic, textual, and cultural aspects of this legal transfer, and concludes that the communicative quality of legal translations is greatly influenced by the linguistic constraints and legal traditions of the target community (p. 205).

In Chapter 12, Celina Frade presents a case study on legal transfer between the relatively dissimilar legal systems of the United Kingdom and Brazil which focuses on the inconsistencies between two English-language translations of a Brazilian domestic arbitration law. The author's analysis addresses the challenges of generic integrity and pragmatic discrepancy in intercultural and intersystemic legal translation. Frade also points out that the competence of legal translators in "adapting" non-official translated versions of domestic legislation is a sensitive issue because, under pressure to meet the demands of the target audience, translators commonly employ entextualization as a shortcut in the process of legal transfer (p. 211).

Contributed by Kayoko Takeda and Yasuhiro Sekine, Chapter 13 surveys the history and progress of legislative translation in Japan, starting from the legal system built by the Meiji government and proceeding to recent efforts to introduce new laws under the country's current administration. Japan's modern legal system borrows from the German and French legal systems and, since the end of World War II, has also been influenced by American law. This chapter describes in detail the methodologies used to translate Japanese laws, including the recent introduction of plain language translation. The authors also elucidate current legal translation problems in Japan, where professional standards and administrative guidance are standard prerequisites for quality legal translation, and cite the need for government initiatives in database standardization and translator training.

In Chapter 14, Rafat Y. Alwazna discusses various approaches to legal translation and contrasts the strategies used in general and legal translations. He then presents a detailed analysis of the strategies employed in Hooper's translation of the Ottoman Courts Manual, the *Al-Majalla*, from Arabic to English. In examining the English version of the *Al-Majalla*, the author identifies and describes problems related to translation by omission, translation by addition, and free translation (p. 252). Alwazna further observes that the adoption of specific translation strategies is influenced both by

the legal traditions which produce the source text and the demands of the target audience.

In Chapter 15, Lijin Sha and Jian Li discuss write about the challenges of English-language translation of the Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China. In some jurisdictions including China legislative are translated mainly for informative purposes. Although these translations are legally non-binding, much effort is put into ensuring the accuracy and consistency of these products while preserving the meanings, connotations, and cultural implications of authoritative Chinese texts. The authors point out that attempts by translators to identify terms in the English common law system which are literally equivalent to those in the Chinese system of law often prove futile (p. 260). For this reason, it is suggested that translation strategies include a semiotic perspective which can help to resolve the dilemma of literal versus free translation.

Marta Chromá discusses in Chapter 16 the process used in the translation of the new Czech Civil Code, which emphasizes legal knowledge and the process of interpretation as important aspects of legal translator competence. Based on a comparative analysis of grammatical and conceptual elements, the author demonstrates how the education of translators in legal concepts and linguistic expressions of the source language can contribute to the overall quality of local translations.

In Chapter 17, Sandy Lamalle presents an analysis of legal translation from the dual perspective of horizontal translation — the translation of concepts into another legal language or system, and vertical translation — the translation of one body of knowledge into another (p. 300). As an example of vertical translation, Lamalle explores the rich history of the Latin term *persona juris* to show how certain legal terminologies possess a unique logical structure which can survive linguistic transfer from one field of knowledge to another (p. 302). Horizontal translation, on the other hand, shows the functions and limits of a transfer of a particular concept. Lamalle's study represents a significant step forward in the development of an ontological foundation for the translation of legal concepts in today's globalized world.

The volume's Afterword addresses the recurrent problem of ethics in legal translation. Author Deborah Cao notes that while translator competence is commonly considered to be an effective ethical safeguard, it is also necessary to establish a legal framework whereby the processes and products of translators can be regulated. Such a regulative framework would, in Cao's view, include practical guidelines for the training and professional development of translators, for the assessment of translation quality and adherence to ethical standards, and for the official accreditation of qualified legal translators and court interpreters.

*The Ashgate Handbook of Legal Translation* is a remarkable compendium of the most current theories and practices in legal translation. Through numerous case studies, it seeks to illuminate the philosophical and ontological aspects of legal discourse and translation methodologies. Legal texts, which consist of norms and canons that are abstracted from real-world discourse, are model-based. On the other hand, the narrative-based interpretations, translations, and applications of these texts tend to be nuanced, subjective, and often controversial. This is especially true in multilingual and multicultural communicative contexts. Although the chapters of this volume address such diverse topics as cultural transfer, units of meaning, plain language, and legal fiction, they consistently juxtapose the legal translation process against the background of cultural traditions and ideologies to reveal the essence of this complex activity not as an entrenched system but rather as a dynamic and multifaceted process. The broad scope of this handbook addresses the translation of laws and legislation in and between many different countries and legal systems to provide an in-depth interdisciplinary view of how legal concepts are interpreted, transferred, and adopted by diverse target audiences. The authoritative contributions of expert authors collectively emphasize the pursuit of consistency and quality in legal translation through improvements in translator training, process theories, practical strategies, and governmental regulation.

In summary, the true value of this superb volume lies in the actionable knowledge which the notable and timely

contributions of internationally-recognized scholars and professionals bring to the rapidly-evolving field of legal translation. As author Susan Šarčević comments on the back cover, "Covering a broad spectrum of topics, the Handbook of Legal Translation […] is recommended reading for academics, students and practitioners interested in the dynamics of legal translation."

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# Autotopology – A Mechanical Journey Through Self

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G. V. Loewen, *Place Meant – Hermeneutic landscapes of the spatial self*, 2015, University Press of America, 266 p.

**Keywords**: telos, autotopology, being-in-the-world, uncanny, spatiality, epektasis, ontological-journey, sociality

G. V. Loewen is a Canadian philosopher whose area of expertise is represented by the traditions of noetics, hermeneutics and phenomenology. He is constantly researching and teaching in the U.S.A. and Canada for over two decades. This assured his excellence in interdisciplinary interpretation so he became one of the most zealous seekers in the previously mentioned fields.

*Place Meant – Hermeneutic Landscapes of the Spatial Self* is the latest of over nineteen titles in his personal bibliography. All of his books share a common idea: it is assumed that being human can be learned through interpretation, dialogue, history and art doubled by a co-dependence with *sociality*. This can possibly give birth to a desire of wanting to discover new and unexplored situations and spaces. That being said, the title of the book becomes self explanatory, hence a creature with the idea of self must have a concept of spatiality as well. The "Place meant" becomes both a wonderous landscape and a personal sixth sense of a personal space. The title actually foresees the continuous duality between spaciness and selfitude, where time turns into fragments of an odd chronology.

The book is dedicated to the memory of the author's parents, that are both architects of another kind of space, helping both the author and the reader to embark in this

phenomenological journey to explore spaces by rethinking some of the most hidden meanings of a commonly shared life-world. Also the reader receives a totem that obliges to take responsibility both for himself, for others and for the space inbetween. The totem is to be found on the front cover and it's passed on from its creator – Emily Carr, to the author, then to the reader. Henceforth the journey suddenly becomes a kerygmatic one, filled with potential dangers of a spiritual form of Being and the immanence of history, that are both kernels of the meaning of proper existence. The text presents five facets of space, five main parts, five symmetrical chapters that describe an ouroborosian journey and each of them can turn into a journey by itself. In the introductory part we face an autotopology meaningful for both the author and the reader, where some of the future places are described, the history that creates anticipation, the birth and death, the beginning and the end of a book, with its internal passages both mundane and divine. Such general geography doesn't necessarily have to manifest itself in the exact same place, cabled together multiple ones can animate both this book and the reader's understanding of space.

The meaning of space is expanding, the *Vorschein* becomes its foundation, it's only possible for the human actions to take place in space. This is what makes space spatial, the meaning of human actions, which are an amalgam of birth and rebirth into new and newer spaces, ever anew by leaving behind the self-constructing process. The creation dissolves into the judgment of the apocalypse, giving birth to new, different but identical forms. These odd resemblances produced by the author for the reader, by the individual for self and for others are the parts of a cosmos, a spatial self that provides mutual trust and comradeship in a new formal world, where leveling one's self becomes leveling the other, where birth and death are still mysteries for the history. Such melange of mythic and mundane becomes the mappable body of life, that makes the lack of continuous bedding a space characterized by spaciality now more than ever. "I stay in place", "I read about a place", "we take place", the space becomes as it should be - infinite, an individual's journey being possible only through temporarity,

leading to pragmatism necessary in all of the day to day's journeys that are so limited. However all this mundane finitude opens the way to a larger purpose. The beginning and the end are but some geometrical points, creating the fine line between mission and vision, necessary in order to reflect the means of both personal and shared futures and the possibility of blending them.

The public and massive space in which the chores are taking place steals our intimacy, the definition of good or bad for oneself is transformed into a sophomore sense of morality. The Greeks were the first to realize that knowledge of the world is self knowledge, what makes the experiences filled with ipsissimosity determines one to seek a world beyond the one we find ourselves in this very moment, then seeking another one and so on. It is well known that the self is becoming the soul of society, demanding another type of "noûs", that surfaces a cartography of awareness, where one must identify as a singular being lost in translation yet sharing the same terraria and language with many.

The human person is now set to confront its own existence, its own participation in the communal universe, the experience of the Other – here other can be either a person or the divine. The human spatial realities become filled with both inner and outer experiences that lead to radical understandings. This questions *why* we do or say and what the *do* and *say* are. In the spatial self, the search for wisdom (having different meanings for different individuals) becomes impetus, but the pathways are not always clear. Such a journey grows into a reality in itself with its own spirit and its own theatrology. One thing is for sure: such itineraries are crafted amidst new queries and new concerns that reveal the thread linking the human subject to an object or a community of subjects who intersubjectively are forced to grow a connection with one another in a Universe composed of multiple split world. In such a space, each individual experiences and experiments new challenges that force one's own space to be re-thought and re-created phenomenologically, where "here" becomes "punctum" from which it can find its start and its end, can be near or far, assuming Logos and Topos in a shared glance.

*Here* defines motion, because it's motion itself, it is the place where one can move into a new horizon, near or far. Loewen lets himself guided by Maurice Natanson (American philosopher who helped introduce the work of Husserl in U.S.A.) that defines the geographical coordinates of the *Here* almost mathematically: they change as one moves, but at the same time, wherever one finds itself, it does so Here. The Hereness is an attribute of the person experiencing the world, since the dreams, for example, have a here of their own, the two topologies seem akin but they're in fact profoundly different. Here can sometimes cause "keno-phobia" (the fear of an empty space) which is treated with the answers provided by each one's culture (as both Gadamer and Dalai Lama agreed). This doesn't solve the problem of estrangement and finitude, as Anfenhalt forces us to face the fact that a space between hereness of being is stolen. The decisions regarding where we are surely belong only to the being. From now on, Here can become one's place only if it's a punctual tangible particle of what the world offers us with a little help from human imagination. From here on we are emplaced, even fractally, and we matter only to a world that doesn't have the patience to wait or, as Loewen reminds us paraphrasing a song: "Stop the world, I want to get off".

Any system must expand. Now, *There* gets its role by being the "ab-normal" space left entirely by the one that has the power to convert past into future. When *There* comes nearer we have knowledge not of its particular items (a infinity of *Here*) but of its *thereness*. The individual becomes filled with both assertive practicality and dispelled desire. Henceforth, the auto-history transforms into one of self-sacrifice since we always have to give up *here* in order to get *there,* yet we are seldom content to leave one place so we can discover another. Loewen makes a constant analogy between humans and stars that are considered our most distant cousins even though we are Earthbound and can only contemplate them, the thought that one day we will join them as a sentient consciousness creates a nostalgia of the unknown that helps reinventing the self, the world, the other and the divine.

If *here* and *there* are subjective experiences of the internal space and the closely acquainted relationship with it, *anywhere*

reunites the near and the far. In the Agora of anywhere the meaningful space fades. The looking glass reflection of this open space is both blurred and vivid causing a mild narcissistic disorder in every person. The Agora's stage triumphs over the individual by its cultural differences, the linguistic diversity and biographical idiosyncrasies offering the challenge to create connections between all that is different from one's self. Anywhere is sketched as in one of Bruegel's paintings where Psyche is a myth in itself, captivating all other myths. Techne is sovereign over Anywhere, where one must achieve extensive knowledge in order to be let by others to reside this fascinating space.

The reader is brought to Everywhere, where one becomes an object for the other and not just a contraption. The immanence of the open space must be filled since we are orbiting around of thousands of others, human beings that we don't know but we must do, transforming one into a proper hero in search for love, for things to like or maybe just to listen and be listened for a while. The closeness of self towards others implies a significant direction through Epektasis. Everywhere demonstrates that if we are bright enough we can obliviate our profound diversity to replace it with sameness. In order to learn the secrets of everywhere we must attempt to discover only one at a time as its very presence is unbearable for our mortal capabilities.

For the cosmic puzzle to be complete, Nowhere is the final aspect of auto-topology, the final stop of the spatial self that is totally unspatial, impossible to be physically measured. In the Nowhere the subjectivity as a Being is demolished, everyone participates to a common transcendental intersubjectivity. This occurrence guards us against solipsism and grants the coexistence in this uncanny concoction. We are not Lot's wife nor Icarus which are symbolic manifestations of the inner spatialities that the self must drift due to the binary restriction imposed by the states of subject and object. The ultimate bound is somewhat foreign as the Klein periphery and the perspective of *Verborgenes*, we rehearse each move in order to see all the closures ahead. We now emerge to look *up*, experiencing pseudovertigo, a glimpse of mortality that keeps us alive.

The book concludes with an *ontology of man*, a space where the possibility seduces the fundamental aspect of humanity by restricting it to a social climate. The contemporaneity is reigned by inaction, it can spawn a holocaust where the aspiration is to take over the liability of the other. The hermeneutic autotopology develops its compass capacity in a world of meanings.

The reader has just accomplished an onthological odyssey (about what there is) rather than an epistemological one (about what we know). We have both (the author and reader) achieved a conceptual grasp between space and place, having Heidegger, Gadamer, Newmann, Carr or Derrida doing our hermeneutics. We have ridden a carousel of both past and future memories where G. V. Loewen placed already known things into a new perspective, creating this almost reversible, ouroboric journey transformed into a topology essential to philosophy. Being a dynamic book, "Place Meant" is filled with pop-culture references (such as quotations from Frank Sinatra's "My Way" or Pink Floyd's "Another brick in the wall", H. P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos) or more eccentric ones (such as the grafitti from the memorial at Auschwitz) and the autobiographical notes, the writer seems to address its work to every individual concerned in creating a personal topology facing the fact that eventually the human race would've developed to a point when we'll shoot sci-fi films in the actual outer space.

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